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A Manual for Confirmation

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Oxford Church Text Books

A Manual for Confirmation

BY

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	Introduction,	1
I.	The Subjects of the Kingdom—'I,'	7
II.	The Subjects of the Kingdom—'WE,'	12
III.	The Baptismal Covenant,	17
IV.	I believe in God the Father,	22
V.	I believe in Jesus Christ,	29
VI.	The Holy Ghost,	38
VII.	The Holy Catholic Church, etc.,	42
VIII.	Renunciation,	48
IX.	The Commandments,	60
X.	Prayer,	83
XI.	Baptism,	91
XII.	Holy Communion,	95
XIII.	Recapitulation,	105

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ALMAE MATRI

ECCLESIAE CHRISTI CANTUAR:

ALUMNUS

INTRODUCTION

Those who use this book will probably belong to a class in which custom and tradition have made Confirmation a recognised incident in life. They will not be called upon to face the trial which in some conditions of society is a severe one—of standing almost alone against the indifference and the ridicule of their friends in taking this definite step on the side of Christ and His Church. They may well thank God that this struggle has been spared them. But they must remember that their own position has its danger also—the danger of regarding Confirmation as a mere formal necessity, as something which they are expected to go through, but of which they hardly recognise the meaning or the obligation.

It is, of course, in one sense a necessity. We believe that in it there is a gift which God offers to us and a duty which He demands from us. But if we think of it as a necessity only because our friends expect us to be confirmed, and most of our acquaintances have been confirmed, we are not doing what God wants us to do, nor can we receive the gift which He is willing to bestow. We must never forget that though the actual presentation of ourselves for Confirmation has been made easy for us, real preparation means a great choice, and the choice involves a great struggle.

Of this struggle we have known something from our

earliest years—the struggle between doing what we like and what we ought. As we get older we see what this means; it is the choice between what God wills and what He hates. In our relation to others it means the choice between a life of selfish enjoyment and a life of useful service to mankind; and this means for us a life which in the end leads to banishment from the face of God hereafter or enjoyment of His Presence and His Love.

Children live naturally without much thought of the future; they anticipate its freedom, but want to put off facing its responsibilities. But the time comes when the choice of a profession must be made, and then we can tell what determines our choice most—whether we think only of what we should like, or think chiefly of the way in which we can be most useful. It is idle to say, 'I want, of course, to be useful, but I want to enjoy myself too, and I cannot see why I must choose between the two.' The fact is that every hour we are choosing between the two, and choosing more and more regularly one or the other. Putting off the choice means living a life with no aim or purpose, following the impulse of the moment instead of pursuing some ideal in the future, and that is really making the wrong choice of what we like instead of what we ought. This is what our Lord means when He says we cannot serve God and Mammon. We cannot combine the life of service and the life of self-seeking, and Confirmation gives us a critical opportunity of choosing between them. We stand as Herakles is represented as standing in a beautiful Greek story—at the parting of the ways, tempted to the one by Pleasure, and invited to the other by Virtue. The choice of Herakles is before us all.

It is a mistake to regard any ordinance of the Church apart from the natural needs and instincts of mankind. Our Lord tells us, for example, that the Sabbath was

made for man, and S. Paul tells us to think first of that which is natural and then of that which is spiritual. It is therefore very instructive to see how very general the feeling has been that boys at a certain age should be taught to realise their duties and responsibilities, and how often with this has been combined some solemn ceremony of dedication to those duties. Of this, perhaps the most beautiful instance is the enrolment of boys as citizens at Athens. As soon as they were old enough to undertake that responsibility they were admitted by a religious ceremony. They took an oath before the gods that they would never disgrace their arms, or desert their comrades; that they would fight for their country to the death, obey its laws, leave it not worse, but better, than they found it; and, above all, reverence the religion of their forefathers.

Chivalry in its ideal presents us with even more instructive symbolism. The candidate for knighthood fasted and confessed his sins and passed the night before his initiation in prayer and watching over his arms. In the morning he bathed and was dressed in new robes, and took before the altar a vow to defend churches, widows, and orphans, and to fight for the faith. He then received from the priest his consecrated sword, with which some prince or noble dubbed him knight.

There is undoubtedly in this something which unites itself with a boy's first and most natural ideas about Confirmation. He recognises an ideal of honour and of bravery; he recognises a call to service; he wants to leave the world better, and not worse, for his having lived in it. He is prepared to stand up before his fellows, and in the presence of God to dedicate his life to the highest that he knows, and then to kneel humbly and pray that God will help him to fulfil his promise. There is in an Englishman an unwillingness to undertake anything

which he does not understand and mean to carry through. 'Pactum serva' is the motto of the greatest of our kings, and it represents, we are proud to think, an instinct in our people.

But in this natural view, as we may call it, of Confirmation, we have as yet had no glimpse of the fact that Confirmation is a sacramental rite of the Church. It is something much more than a convenient expression of a natural instinct. It is a means whereby God has seen fit to convey to us a gift. We must not think first of what we can do, but of what God has done. God always comes to us before we come to Him. The choice between right and wrong is not as it were an open question. God has chosen us to be His children before He asks us to make our choice for Him. We love Him because He first loved us.

It is true that in the Confirmation Service we are told that we come to confirm the promises made in our name, but we speak more usually of coming to be confirmed. And this is right. We must think first of God's gift. At our Confirmation God gives to us the special help of the Holy Spirit. He gives us new intellectual and moral powers which make perfect the power which we received at Baptism. We must be sure we really desire this help, prepare to receive it, and then realise how great is God's claim on us to show our gratitude for it. That is what preparation for Confirmation means. It involves:—

1. The preparation of the mind: to try and understand the story of the great things God has done for us, the exceeding love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ dying for us. The reading of the story of His life and death, the study of His perfect example, should be a great part of our care. The more clearly we understand this, the more perfectly shall we proceed to

2. The preparation of the heart. The thought of what God has done for us must lead to the thought of what we must do for Him. The story of His love must create love in our hearts in return, the loving desire to serve and please Him in all things. We must therefore ask ourselves whether our desire is :—

a. Sincere and thorough. We deceive ourselves often and know little of our own failings. We are in danger of clinging to some one evil habit which we find it difficult to give up, or to neglect some one special duty which happens to be particularly unpleasant. We must be honest with ourselves and with God, and not fancy that we desire what we do not desire or hate what we really want to keep.

b. Definite and practical. We are tempted to admire heroism in other people, and to hope vaguely that we may follow noble examples some day. We want to secure the results without paying the price, and to win the crown without the struggle. We must mark out definite temptations to be resisted, definite duties to fulfil. We must 'do the next thing,' and make the right choice in the difficulties which meet us hour by hour.

c. Constant. We are easily attracted by what is novel. The great test of character is dogged perseverance.

d. Progressive. It must begin with a feeling and a loving desire, but it must not end in emotion. There must be practical result in duties done, evil habits conquered, progress gained. God will not reject us because we have not yet gained a complete conquest over sin, nor will He reject us because again and again we fail to realise our hopes. But He does ask sincerity, and we may be quite certain that if we are making no progress at all we are not sincere. It cannot be God's fault, it

must be ours; it is not that God fails to fulfil His promise, but that we are not sincere in our prayers which claim it.

3. Consequently, beside the preparation of mind and heart, there must be the gradual discipline of the will: we pray that we may not only perceive and know what things we ought to do, but also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them.

We have been obliged to anticipate much which will presently receive further explanation. It was necessary to make clear the two sides of Confirmation—God's gift and our obligation—and the threefold preparation of mind and heart and will which will enable us to receive the gift and to carry out the duty.

CHAPTER I

THE SUBJECTS OF THE KINGDOM—'I'

A GERMAN philosopher made his children keep as their birthday the anniversary of the day when they first said 'I.' The day we first say 'I' is the beginning of our conscious life, our true life as human beings. For man is not only able to feel and to act, he can also think of himself as feeling and acting. He can look at himself, as it were, and say these are my thoughts, my feelings, my actions. This special power God gave him at the beginning when He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, or more properly, a living self.

Our separate life.—Now when we think of ourselves in this way, we are first conscious of our separateness from all other people. We remember things in the past which no one else remembers; we feel things now which no one else feels; and we look forward to something in the future which no one else will share. This separate 'self' has a continuous history. Memory and hope unite the past and the future with the present. We not only remember what we did in the past, but we know that we bear the results of it in our life to-day, as we shall bear the consequences of what we do to-day through the years that lie before us. Then at last there will be the one great experience in which most solemnly the separateness of our life and its continuity will be

impressed upon us. We shall pass from this stage of life to another, and in that life beyond the grave we shall come separately before the judgment of God to give account of our own works. This is the solemn message of the prophet Ezekiel. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' The father shall not bear the iniquity of the son, nor the son bear the iniquity of the father. We shall not be judged or punished for what other people have done. Every man shall bear his own burden.

Our difference from each other.—We see further that these lives of ours are not only separate, they are also different from each other. No two men were ever exactly alike, or ever will be. We differ strangely in intellectual ability, in bodily strength and skill, in our tastes, our likes and dislikes, but, above all, in character. In comparison with this all other differences, however great, seem of little importance. This is largely because we feel that for character we have more responsibility.

Conscience.—Now it is plain that we cannot have responsibility for that over which we have no control. And we have no power of deciding the circumstances in which and the capacities with which we are born. Our nationality, our position in life, our mental and bodily powers are things assigned to us by God, and for what we may call our original outfit for life we are not responsible. But we are responsible for the use we make of it. And this responsibility we feel whether our gifts be great or small, whether we have the one talent or ten. If our capacities are poor, or circumstances make life difficult, we are apt to make this an excuse. But we should note that in the parable it is the servant who has the one talent who is condemned for not using it. For though we feel that some men are by nature or circumstance more disposed than others to falsehood or sensuality or cruelty, yet we have seen already that no

one is left without the instinct which leads him to distinguish between right and wrong, and which we call conscience.

Will.—Further, we feel that no man is forced to be a drunkard or a liar unless he chooses; and that though we cannot make ourselves great orators or musicians if the natural gifts have been denied us, yet in doing our duty God has left to each of us the power of choice. We can reflect and make up our minds whether we shall do this or not, and we do not do it until we have chosen. This power of choice is what we call our will. And when we come to look back on any wrong thing which we have done, as a rule we cannot help feeling that we need not have done it. We confess that we have sinned through our own most grievous fault.

Responsibility and God's judgment.—Now this exercise of choice is the more important because every time our will consents to an act of falsehood or cowardice it becomes far more probable that we shall act in the same way on the next occasion. Temptation once resisted makes it easier to resist again, but every wrong act makes a wrong act of the same sort easier also. It forms a habit, and it is the original peculiarities of our disposition and tendency as deepened and developed by habits that we call character. This character is our true self; it is by this God judges us. He does not judge us for things in which we have no responsibility, but for the development of our character by habit we are responsible.

Our name.—This self, then, so separate, so peculiar in its power and capacity, its past and its future, its destiny and responsibility, we feel sometimes to be thrown on its own resources, to fight its own battles, to meet its own fate. There comes a point where no *man* can deliver his brother. Each must feel that he stands, as S. Paul

would say, like a gladiator in the arena before God and angels and men. To Him and to them he is marked out by his name.

It is the meaning of this name that the Catechism brings before us by its opening question. We find in the Bible the name constantly connected with a man's character, representing the thoughts and judgments which the world form about him. So the angel asks Jacob his name and changes it to Israel. And when we are asked our name and reminded that it was given to us at our baptism, it brings home to us the fact of our relation to God with which our religious life begins. God knows us and thinks of us and loves us separately. God says to each of us, 'I have laid My hand upon thee, and called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.' The Good Shepherd knoweth His sheep by name.

Our value in God's sight.—We need to be reminded of this, because when men see the millions of people in the world, and remember how small a part of God's universe it is, they are always tempted to think that it does not matter what they do or what becomes of them. So an old Jewish writer says, 'Say not thou, I will hide myself from the Lord, I shall not be remembered among so many people, for what is my soul among such an infinite number of creatures?' But we learn the secret of true self-reverence, the preciousness of our lives, and the importance of our actions. God loves us, and God has need of us.

This will help us partly, though, of course, only partly, to understand two great difficulties: First, how evil and sin exist in the world; secondly, why there are such differences in worldly advantages.

God has a great purpose to carry out, which He allows men to share, because it is His will to be served not merely by things like the sun and stars, which move in

paths they cannot leave, but by beings that can think and judge and choose. God shows us what is good and leads us to the light, but leaves us free to turn our back upon it if we will.

And as He has a different purpose for each, He sends us into the world with different endowments. And though we may see others richer or, as we think, better off in other ways than ourselves, we may be sure that what God has given us is exactly sufficient to enable us, if we will, to carry out the task which He has set us; and we must no more complain that we have not greater powers than a soldier who is charged with lower duties would complain because he was not in command.

We shall understand this more clearly if we read carefully what S. Paul tells us about himself. He was from the day of his birth separated and set apart for God's service. Solemnly before he started to preach he was set apart by the Church for this work whereto God had called him. In the same way we must think of our lives as set apart for God's purpose from their beginning, and that there is for us as surely as there was for S. Paul a work to which God has called us. To this we are dedicated by name in our Baptism, for this we believe God gives us the gift of His Holy Spirit to strengthen us in our Confirmation.

CHAPTER II

THE SUBJECTS OF THE KINGDOM—'WE'

It has been said a child's second birthday is the day it learns to say 'We.' First comes the consciousness of its own life, separate from all beside. It is conscious of its own thoughts and feelings and its own responsibilities. It feels that it has a power of choice, and that God's sentence is just, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.'

But very soon must come the consciousness that this life is not wholly separate. It is touched and influenced at every point by other lives. Different as one man is from another, we soon must recognise that, underlying all differences, there is a great resemblance. Other people feel and think and act much as we do. Further, we find ourselves continually benefited by the good deeds, and suffering from the bad deeds of other people, even when, so far as we can tell, we have done nothing whatever ourselves to earn the benefit or to deserve the suffering. 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father,' says the prophet, and yet the Second Commandment tells us that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. We must see how this is.

It comes from the fact that the whole human race forms one great brotherhood or family. We recognise (even with the most savage and degraded races) that there is something we possess in common, something which unites us with them and separates us both from

the lower animals: it is a common nature. 'God made of one,' says S. Paul, 'all nations to dwell on the face of the whole earth'; and science tells us quite as clearly that all mankind are derived from a single stock.

Human Nature.—In the Book of Genesis we read that 'God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.' No doubt children when they read these words would think, as many people in early days thought, that God fashioned a body of clay as a potter might make a vessel; and Milton describes the creation as a procession of creatures rising full formed from the ground. It seems, however, certain that the higher forms of life were formed by gradual development from the lower, and that even in the case of the first parents of the human race, the bodily nature had been developed in this way. This we gather from observation and from reason. But the Bible tells us something beyond this, viz., that God gave to man a special gift. 'He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' It is this which distinguishes man from the beasts that perish. Man has the breath of life, which makes him immortal, and gives him that consciousness of his own existence and of his relation to God which we have been considering.

We must not suppose that man at the beginning was quite perfect, but he was capable of becoming so if he had obeyed the voice of conscience which God had given him. But it was God's purpose to allow man free choice: he made the wrong choice, and deliberately disobeyed, and this is what we call 'The Fall of Man.' The Bible puts it before us in the story of Adam. Man deliberately disobeyed what he knew was God's law, and all mankind ever since have suffered from the consequences of his disobedience. The stars in the heavens and the flowers and the trees fulfil God's will perfectly, but not

with a free service; the service of God's holy angels is free and perfect. If man had been obedient, his service would have been perfect too, and his progress would have been quite a different thing from what the history of the world shows it has been. The Bible tells us that this was made impossible by disobedience, and that we all suffer from this disobedience, and this we are taught to call sin. Mankind are, therefore, united in a family by a common origin and a common nature, and by this common and sad experience.

Sin.—Now it is very necessary for us to understand clearly what sin is, because sin is an idea which can hardly be found outside the Bible; it is something which God by His Holy Spirit taught the Jews. Other nations, of course, have had their ideas of right and wrong, but of an imperfect kind. The Romans felt that a man owed a duty to his country and his father; that he ought to be brave and to obey the laws. The Greeks felt that a man owed a duty to himself not to do foul or unseemly things. Some said that a man should try and develop all his powers as perfectly as possible, so that he might reach the highest ideal of perfection for himself. Some, no doubt, thought of a duty to the gods also; but in their notion of wrong there was something wanting which we have in our sense of sin. With sin all thought of wrong to ourselves, or our friends, or our relations, or our country, is lost sight of. We think of an act of sin only as something deliberately done which we know God has forbidden, or a thing deliberately neglected which we know God has ordered us to do. When we sin we feel that it is against God only we have sinned, and that we have done the wickedness in His sight. Therefore, there are connected with sin two thoughts chiefly. First, that it separates us from God; secondly, that its consequences are death, which is indeed separation from God.

This is exactly what we are taught of the original sin of man.

And in this we have a share, and of the loss it causes we bear a part.

We are not taught exactly that we are punished for the wrong act of some one else, as a man would be punished if he were fined in a police court for what some one else had done. But we soon learn that some one suffers for every wrong act that we do. And as we have seen that the whole human race is one family, one brotherhood, created of one blood and one nature, so we are taught that this whole family has the inheritance of sin. We know that we are born with a nature which makes it absolutely impossible for us to obey God always, or to serve Him perfectly; and this is so because we inherit the nature and disposition, and suffer for the wrongdoings of those who have gone before us. The union of mankind in one family and brotherhood is shown as much by the universal fact of sin as it is by their knowledge of God and the presence of His voice in their conscience. Then, further, the Bible tells us that for this reason men are not only disposed to do wrong, but that they are separated from God's love and favour. And though a father may never forget that a disobedient child is his son, yet between him and his son there may be a separation caused by disobedience, which he cannot make up even if he will. There is such a separation between man and God made by sin.

We can now explain what the Catechism means by saying that we are by nature born in sin and children of wrath. When a traitor was attainted in blood all his children suffered loss of inheritance, of dignity, and possessions. So we by the original disobedience of man are before God attainted; we have lost our birthright to the original gift of eternal life, and we inherit a

disposition which makes it quite certain that we shall repeat the acts of sin by which the inheritance was lost. Mankind, as a family, are separated from their Heavenly Father and subject to His displeasure and anger. But God has contrived a way by which His children may return to Him. It is of this which the Christian religion tells us.

CHAPTER III

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

Holy Baptism.—God's method for bringing His disobedient children back to Him is the creation of a new family, which He calls His Holy Church. Mankind, God's first creation, and Holy Church, His new creation, are always contrasted with each other in Holy Scripture. The union of mankind in a common sentence of separation from God was created and caused by disobedience. God's new family, the Church, was created by an act of perfect obedience. As members of the human race we are exposed to God's displeasure. As members of His new family we are restored to His love. We are adopted once more to be His children. He takes us to Himself and restores to us the lost privileges of sonship and inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. The Catechism puts this privilege in two ways. It tells us that by our baptism, that is, by our admission to the society of God's Holy Church, we are made children of grace. This is exactly the opposite of children of wrath. By grace we mean God's free favour bestowed of His own loving will upon mankind. Children of grace are His sons, to whom He gives the undeserved privilege of His love. They receive it as baptized and admitted members of the society of the Church. In another place, at the very beginning of the Catechism, we are told that in our baptism we were made members of Christ, children

of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. In a sense, as we said just now, all children of men are children of God, but they are separated from Him and have lost their birthright and privilege as sons. In their baptism, when they are made members of God's new family, the privilege is restored, namely, the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. This privilege is the right of the restored sonship to God, and this sonship is given back to us because we are members of Christ. There is, of course, much more to be said of Holy Baptism, but this must be understood at the outset. It is admission to a society—a family—and this family is the restoration of the natural brotherhood of the human race. Therefore, just as the human race is one, and all its members are united, so Holy Church is one body, and its members are united together. It is spoken of as the body of Christ, and this explains the words of the Catechism that in baptism we are made members of Christ. The unity of the Church with its Lord is described in the Bible in two or three ways. He says, 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches'; by baptism we are like branches grafted into a tree. S. Paul speaks of it as a temple, of which Christ is the foundation stone; we are by baptism built into the temple walls. But the most usual and most striking figure is that of the body. Christ is the Head. We are members or limbs. We are made part of the body by our baptism, so that life can flow from the Head to us. And as in the body each separate member cannot exist or live apart from the body, and yet each has its own work and office to fulfil, so we in our lives and duties cannot live the life of the sons of God apart from the life which comes to us through the body, the Church, from Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. And yet we have each our separate office and our separate work, as we shall have to undergo

our separate judgments. The Prayer Book calls the Church the 'mystical body' of Christ. This means that the union between Christ and His people is something real which we cannot see with our eyes; it belongs to the unseen world, it is something in which we must believe; but the body with its head and members is the nearest visible thing to it, the illustration by which we can best understand it. It was created by the sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

Now God's new family, the Church, is represented as so closely parallel to the natural family of mankind, that our entrance to it is described as a new birth. Baptism is a new birth; its water is called the washing of regeneration or being born again. Our Lord says we must be born again. The simplest explanation of this that we can give is just this, that we become members of a new family. But we must carefully note not only the resemblance, but also the difference, between the first birth and the second. In both cases the birth is the gift of God. We have no choice in the matter of being born. We are born as God wills, and when and where He wills. But in the natural birth we become members of a family in which we always must remain without effort of our own. Our human nature is given us at birth, and remains with us. But in the Church of Christ we can only remain if we keep the conditions of the Church. And the conquest over our nature and its desires is not given to us at once when we are admitted to the Church. It comes only to those who are faithful and loyal members of it.

The Baptismal Covenant.—These conditions are contained in the three promises made for us by our godfathers and godmothers at our baptism, and are usually called the Baptismal Covenant. The word Covenant, however, is not the best word to employ, as it suggests

something of a bargain. We must never forget that Holy Baptism is first of all a great gift of God. God receives a child to be His son. A great privilege is, as a fact, given. This is why infants are baptized. We believe that it is God's gracious will to receive all those who are brought to Him by His Church, as Jesus our Lord upon earth received little children. Those thus brought God takes and adopts as His own, and we believe that God does not desire any period of human life to be passed without this gift. But when this privilege has been given, we, on our part, have a necessary duty. A child born in England by its birth inherits the rights of Englishmen, but without any promise becomes bound to discharge the duties of an Englishman. Just in the same way the admission by the new birth of baptism into the citizenship of God's kingdom implies, without any formal promise, the obligation to fulfil the duties of citizens of the kingdom of heaven. The promise is made so that the child may understand more clearly what the duties are, and that they may be more solemnly impressed upon his conscience. If this were not so, we might ask by what right other people made promises in our name at all. There can be no question about the obligation. It is our answer to God's goodness. They are not merely 'vows it is a shame for man not to be bound by'—they are the laws of the kingdom of which we are made citizens. So at Confirmation we receive a great gift, of which more will be said hereafter. God gives us the grace of the indwelling of His Holy Spirit to strengthen us. We repeat the promises in our own name, not because from earliest infancy we have not been bound by them, not that we could possibly avoid the duty if with our mouth we did not acknowledge it, but first to make us clearly understand what the duties of our privilege

are; and secondly, to impress them solemnly upon our conscience.

Before an English bishop can enter into the privileges of his position he solemnly swears allegiance to the King; but this allegiance he always has owed, and would owe apart from the oath. Yet still the duty acquires in this way a solemn impressiveness.

CHAPTER IV

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER

The Three Vows.—We have now clearly before us the choice, two masters, two kingdoms—life and light, darkness and death. Baptism removes us from the one and incorporates us in the other. No man can serve two masters. At our baptism, then, we renounce the Devil and all his works. The very word Renunciation reminds us of the old feudal forms of which a bishop's homage to the King is a survival; and when the vow of renunciation was made, it was the custom to face the west, the side of the setting sun, as typical of the darkness which we renounce, and at the profession of faith in God to turn to the east, as we do when we say the Creed, that our faces may be towards the light.

The first promise, the first condition of membership in the new kingdom, is to believe in God. He that cometh to God must believe that He is. Our first duty to God is to believe in Him.

What, then, is belief or faith, because, as we are now speaking, the words mean the same thing? Faith is a power given us by God by which we are as sure of the existence of the invisible world as we are by our senses of things which we can see. It is the proof or test of the things which we cannot see, the foundation on which we rest the certainty that the things we hope for are really true. If we are certain that God exists,

and that He has a reward for those who seek Him, it is because He has given us this power of faith.

We, like the Jews, are often inclined to wish that God had made everything so plain to us that no one could possibly doubt the truth of the unseen world. But it is God's way to give us enough to justify faith, not to compel it. The Jews were not content with what they saw of the power of Jesus; they wanted Him to tell them plainly if He were the Christ, and to give them a sign from heaven. But, as He said to S. Thomas, there is a greater blessedness, to believe without having seen. Faith is a greater and higher power than reason or than knowledge.

But though faith is higher than reason, and deals with different things, as our souls and bodies are joined in one nature, faith cannot be independent of reason, still less can it be contrary to it. God never bids us believe a thing which our reason condemns as impossible, and the saying, 'I believe because it is impossible,' is a sheer absurdity.

But the great teacher who says, 'I believe in order that I may understand,' puts the matter exactly right. When our Lord thanks His Father that He has hidden things from the wise and prudent to reveal them to babes, He does not mean us to think little of the power of thought which God has given us, but He does teach us the great truth that we are on the wrong track if we think that we must understand first and prove first, and believe afterwards. We must come to Him with a humble and teachable mind. We must become as little children if we are to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

There are mysteries far beyond our power to grasp, and power and insight into them is gained not by great mental ability of reasoning, but by praying to be taught by God. Then it is that our reason will show us more

and more how they correspond to what our nature needs and is intended to become.

But S. Paul tells us to prove all things. We must hold fast only that which is true. There are many things about the unseen world which men have been taught that certainly are not true. What, then, are we to believe about the unseen world, and what is the test by which we justify our belief; and how do we account for men's mistaken beliefs and superstitions?

We believe in the existence of an Almighty Power, the Maker and Preserver of all things. Such belief we find to be practically universal in mankind, and this is generally acknowledged. Men who have given up this belief themselves try to account for its existence in many ways, but faith is God's gift, and we hold that this belief must have been part of God's original gift to mankind. And when men by disobedience were separated from God, the clear light and knowledge of what God is was taken from them. As S. Paul says, their foolish hearts were darkened; they worshipped God in many degrading ways, in the form of fetiches and idols; and losing sight of His true nature and character, thought not of one loving Father, but of many gods, cruel, lustful, revengeful, and debased. But yet the knowledge of God was never entirely lost, men are described as groping like blind men in the darkness, feeling after God, if possibly they might find Him.

This is what we call **Natural Religion**, that is, the ideas which men have themselves formed of the nature and character of God and their relationship to Him. For men not only believe that God exists, but feel also that they stand in a certain relationship to Him. This is indeed what the word Religion means. It is derived from a word which means a tie or a bond. It has been defined as friendship with God, a sense of our connection with

Him, and His connection with us. A religious man is not a man who goes through certain outward religious acts, but a man who constantly lives with a sense of the tie which binds him to God—lives, as we may say, in the enjoyment of the friendship of God. So Abraham, who is called the father of the faithful, is spoken of in the East generally as 'El Khalil,' the friend of God.

When S. Paul is speaking to the heathen, he always appeals first to this sense which he knows all his hearers have—the sense of their relation to an unseen power. He quotes one of their own poets, who said, 'We are His offspring.' But he shows them how degrading their ideas of God had been, and leads them on to see that God does not leave men in ignorance. The Unknown God Whom they ignorantly worshipped, S. Paul declared unto them.

He tells us clearly that it was through man's own fault that he had lost knowledge of God, but that God was not willing that men should remain in ignorance of Him, and that He had a way and plan by which to make Himself known. This is what we call **Revelation.** The substance of it is what we call Revealed Religion.

God's method is always to work by choice, from some centre which He chooses for His purpose—and to work gradually. So He chose Abraham and separated him from his family. He chose the descendants of Abraham and made them a separate people. He gradually by His prophets taught them the truths of His nature and His love, and so prepared the time of the coming of His Son Jesus Christ, Who revealed to the world in full what the prophets had foreshadowed. The Bible is the revealed Word of God, because it contains first the story of this gradual teaching and preparation; secondly, the story of the life and the teaching and the death of Jesus Christ, Who was and is Himself the Word of God; and

thirdly, the message left to the world by His followers and apostles.

It puts before us many things which our reason unassisted could not possibly discover, some things which we only imperfectly understand, but nothing which our reason declares to be impossible.

But our Lord did not merely teach His disciples while He was on earth. He formed them into a Church, and promised to be with them always, and to give them the Spirit which should teach them all the truth. Gradually the Church was guided thus to put into short forms the chief points of the Christian faith. These forms we call the Creeds. That which occurs in the Communion Service is called the Nicene Creed, because the greater part of it was agreed upon at the Council of Nicæa in 325. The shortest, that which we promise at our baptism to believe, is called the Apostles' Creed—not because it was actually written by the Apostles, but because it exactly represents their teaching. From very early times something like it was used at Baptism. The main part of it was used at Rome and elsewhere early in the second century. We promise to believe *all* the Articles, that is, all the separate points or statements. The word 'article' means literally a little joint, and the different points in the Creed are jointed and fitted together into one system, like the bones in a skeleton. We cannot, therefore, pick and choose; we are told to believe them all, first, because of the authority of the Church on which they rest; and secondly, because they hang together in this way, so that the completeness of the faith is injured if any one of its parts is rejected: and all depend on the first article, the true idea of the Fatherhood of God.

We are taught not only to believe that He exists, even the devils believe that and shudder. We are taught to

believe *in* Him, that is, in His character, to put our whole trust in Him, to love Him. Some heathen nations have regarded God as a power delighting in human misery, whose anger or delight in suffering is only to be bought off by sacrifice, even of human beings, their sons and their daughters. The Mohammedan is a fatalist. He thinks that the world is ruled by some blind power that seems neither to know nor care what happens to men. In face of any disaster he says, 'Kismet'—'It cannot be helped.' But God is not a vague power, but a Person. He is not a person without purpose or character, but loving, guiding, and disposing everything.

Something of this has been explained already. We believe that from the day of our birth He has watched over us. We were born when and as He willed, not idly, not by accident, but as part of His purpose. Nothing that has ever happened to us has come by accident or chance. It is all part of His purpose towards us. God has never brought any single life into this world without some purpose for it to fulfil. He has for each of us now some definite work for which, if we listen to His voice and obey Him, He is training us and will fit us. It is the one secret which gives dignity to our lives to know that God has need of them; that He has a work for each one of them. There is something for each one of us to do for God which no one else can do. But yet we have the mysterious power of disappointing God's purpose and causing part of His work to fail.

If we really believe in God, we can never be discontented. He gives us what is best. We can never be frivolous or idle; our time, our lives are His, we dare not waste them. We can never be despondent about ourselves, because if God has given us a task, we may be sure that if we are faithful He will not leave us without the power to fulfil it. The value of life is thus quite independent

of what men call success or prosperity, quite independent of circumstance. Faith in its purpose will hold through all doubts and adversities. The result of sheer atheism is seen in the admiral of the Chinese fleet, who killed himself when his ships were defeated. The man who believes in no Divine Governor of the world may struggle on while the struggle is on the whole going well with him ; but if defeat or misfortune arises, there is no explanation and no consolation. But we believe that we are, as Cicero says, soldiers set as sentries by a general ; we cannot leave our post till we are recalled. We may be sure we are never useless and never forgotten.

This belief, of which we see the great men of the heathen world had some idea, our Lord Jesus Christ brings home to us in a newer and clearer way. He bids us trust in the lovingkindness of a Father by Whom the very hairs of our head are numbered, but He adds also something which is entirely new.

He tells us how we stand before God in view of our disobedience and sin. God is holy as well as merciful, justice as well as love. God's love to sinners in spite of sin ; God's desire to restore to them the knowledge of Himself and communion with Himself,—this is what Jesus Christ came to reveal to us. He came to show us God's way, and He is Himself the Way. He came to show us God not only as our Father, but as His Father. The consideration of our Lord's Person and Office is the second point of the Creed.

CHAPTER V

I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

The Holy Trinity.—As soon as we begin to read the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that He claims a power above human power. The Jews rightly declared that He made Himself equal with God when He said, 'I and My Father are one.' This to them appeared blasphemous, because the whole of their history had taught them to believe that there is but one God, nor could they imagine how that could be if He Who was on earth among them was God, and His Father in heaven was God also. This involves the most mysterious doctrine of the Christian Faith—the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. There is but one God, but yet in the Godhead are three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In dealing with this we must constantly bear in mind that God's revelation of Himself to us must be limited by what our minds are able to understand and what our language is able to express.

All words that we can use of God are imperfect, and only express the nearest approach that we can make to the infinite, and we must thus be on our guard even when we use the words that we are taught to use of the three *Persons*, of the Holy Trinity. When we say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three Persons, we mean that it is from our knowledge of ourselves as persons that we obtain the clearest idea which we can

have of the distinctions in the Godhead. A person has a separate office and work; he can think of himself and of others, and recognise himself as distinct from others. To some extent these thoughts apply to the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Our Lord speaks of His Father and of the Spirit Whom He would send as distinct from Himself, and of His own work as distinct from that of His Father and the Spirit. And yet the distinction does not extend to the division of the Godhead. The three Persons are one God. It is said that S. Patrick used the shamrock leaf to illustrate the doctrine, but the whole relation is so far above our experience that such illustration helps us very little. We can only note in the Old Testament faint hints or shadows of the great truth, as in the hymn of the angel-worship in the vision of Isaiah. Further, the doctrine rests upon the authority and really involves the character of our Lord Himself. Any attempt to represent Him merely as a human teacher, though much the greatest and best of human teachers, is met by the difficulty that He claimed a position and spoke in a manner which distinctly implied that He was more than man; and if this claim is false, His authority, not to say His character as a teacher, falls with it. Lastly, it is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and it alone, which explains the simple teaching that God is Love.

If God made this universe, there was a time before it was made, a time, as the Creed says, before all worlds. There was then nothing beyond Himself existing as an object of the love of God. The God of the greatest of the Greek philosophers had nothing to do but to think about himself. The God of the Christian is Love; between the three Persons of the Holy and Undivided Trinity there is the sacred bond of a love eternal and unchangeable.

It is thus we begin our thoughts of the Second Person,

God the Son, begotten of His Father before all worlds. Here we see how insufficient words are, how misleading they may be. In our natural thoughts of father and son, the father in time comes before the son. But with God the Son it is not so. There never was a time when He did not exist. S. John speaks of Him as the Word of God Who was in the beginning with God, and Who was God. All we can say is that the relation of father and son is of all things within our experience that which represents to us most nearly the relation of the first two Persons of the Holy Trinity. By calling the Son the **Word of God** S. John teaches us that it is through Him that the Father reveals Himself to us.

This revelation is twofold. First, we are taught to think of God's revelation of Himself in nature. The sun and sky, the wind and rain, the fruitful seasons which fill our hearts with food and gladness, are witnesses of the wisdom and the power and the love of God, a book which, as Keble expresses it, 'who runs may read.' But all things were made by God the Father through the Son. Through Him all things were made, and God's fatherly care revealed. But this revelation men did not understand, and therefore God chose a more direct way. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. God the Son became **Incarnate**; that is, He took our human nature upon Him in the womb of a human mother, and without any human father was born into this world. Just as our souls and bodies are united in one person, so in Christ the perfect nature of God and the perfect nature of man were united to form one Person. Thus being perfect God and perfect Man, He could reveal to man the true nature of God.

But the Incarnation had a further purpose. It revealed to man what human nature really is, and what God intended it to become. Our Lord spoke of Himself

as the Son of Man, to teach men that they were sons of God. He is the Ideal Representative of our race, showing our nature in its ideal and perfect condition; and by His Resurrection and Ascension showing us its future destiny. Men had been led astray to degrade their nature to the level of beasts by foul and debasing lusts; they had lost sight of what their origin was and what God meant their future to be. This Jesus Christ taught them by actually living a life as God intended it should be lived, and leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. But He left us much more than an example. He left us the power which enables us to follow it. He did much more than reveal to us what God intended man to be, and the inheritance He intended man to obtain. He Himself is the power which enables us to be what we should be, and to win the prize that God reserves for His sons.

For the third purpose of the Incarnation is to reconcile man and God, to do away with the separation, and to re-establish the true relation between man and God. This work is spoken of in the most general way sometimes as the **Atonement**—the making God and man at one, sometimes as our Redemption or deliverance from the power of the enemy.

These words which we use to describe our Lord's work for us are words which originally apply to certain conditions of human life. They therefore follow our Lord's method of teaching by parables, and show us what the kingdom of heaven is like. They suggest some familiar condition as the best explanation of what we are to understand. For instance, the words Redemption and **Redeemer** suggest a prisoner of war for whose release a ransom must be paid. And such by sin men were in the power of Satan. But if we are not careful, illustrations lead us astray; and we must not suppose that Satan ever

had any right over us by which he could demand, as it were, from God Himself the price of the Son's death as the cost of our release. Christ's death was the defeat of the devil, not a price paid him. But man by his sin had placed himself in Satan's power. We know how evil companions get a hold over men, how we make ourselves the servants of those to whose evil suggestions and temptations we once yield. From this bondage we cannot get free without a painful struggle. This is the nature of the hold which the devil has upon those who yield to him, nor can it be broken without a sacrifice.

Next, we speak of Christ as our **Mediator** and **Advocate**, as reconciling us to His Father and ending the separation between man and God. As to the fact of this separation there is no doubt. Men must feel it and acknowledge it. But the separation is not on God's side. From the time of man's first disobedience the love of God to man has never ceased. God has longed for the return of His disobedient children.

Why, then, we ask, was it necessary that the Son of God should die to bring this about?

First, there is the need on man's side. Man must desire to return. God gave to man at the first freedom to choose; that gift of freedom could not be taken away. If man would not return, God would not force him. A father may have sent his son away from home and long to have him back again. But the son may be obstinate and unrepentant and indifferent to the yearning of his father's love. So men were to God. But our Lord said if He were lifted up and crucified He would draw all men unto Him. The Cross would show men such a picture of the love of God that hearts which nothing else could touch would be touched and softened by it.

But if we think of some wild member of a family

banished to the colonies, he must have something more than a desire to return. There must be the power and the right; there is the barrier of sea to be crossed; and when he returns, there is the wild life of the wanderer to be exchanged for the life of the true home. So it is with God's banished sons—they need the power, and the right to return, the power also to live the true life of sons. And from the earliest times we see a mysterious instinct which made them seek to obtain this power and right by sacrifice. The first meaning and purpose of sacrifice was to restore a broken union between God and man.

But this meaning gradually became lost to sight, and in sacrifice men rather sought either to propitiate an angry Deity by gifts which they thought their gods would like, or by food on which they supposed they would feast; or else they endeavoured to secure forgiveness by substituting for themselves the life of some living victim, occasionally human beings, and even their firstborn sons, to whose head they supposed their sins could be transferred, and by whose death they would make atonement. Each of these ideas contains some perverted side of a truth; but the first misrepresents the anger and ignores the love of God, the second puts out of sight His justice. Therefore the Psalmist teaches that God does not eat bulls' flesh or drink the blood of goats; the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. The prophet Micah proclaims that man need not offer his firstborn for his transgression; God's requirement is that he should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. The chief sacrifice which man was called upon to offer, the sacrifice without which all other sacrifices were useless, was the sacrifice of himself—his whole life; but it must be the offering of perfect obedience, a will entirely submitted to the will of God, a life of perfect

correspondence with the law of God. This God required, and this man could not give.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ then teaches the real truth which these ideas of sacrifice vaguely endeavoured to express, and obtained for man that union with God which by them man had vainly endeavoured to secure.

He is the real **Propitiation** for our sins. Men have an instinctive feeling that crime and wrongdoing cannot be simply winked at and passed over. Every magistrate, every officer, every master, one may say every schoolboy, knows this. And this instinct is a right one. Sin is an outrage to the majesty of God; it is defiance of His law, disobedience to His will. There are some things which, we say with reverence, God cannot do. He cannot deny His own nature; and to treat sin as if it could be ignored would be denying His own nature. Sin must be shown in its awful character and in its deadly results, and the death of Jesus Christ caused by the sin of men showed this as nothing else could show it.

But the instinct to which we have referred demands that punishment should fall on the actual offender. Yet Christ died for us; He bore our sins; by His stripes we are healed. This takes us back to a distinction drawn in a previous chapter between the consequences of sin and the punishment of sin—a distinction which we shall understand better if we think of it first not in the world at large, but as it is familiar to us in what we often call the little world of school life. It is not difficult to imagine a school of which the whole life has been corrupted by evil tradition and custom prevailing and growing worse through a long period of years. The original authors of the mischief may have been punished, but the consequences of their evil deeds are not thereby ended. The atmosphere of the school is tainted, pain

and misery are caused to children who by no fault of their own are unfortunate enough to be sent to it. The evil, no doubt, can be stopped, but it needs not only the punishment of the wicked, but the suffering of the innocent.

It is part of the mystery of life that the innocent should thus suffer for the deeds of others, still it is a fact. The children of the gambler and the drunkard daily pay the penalty for the sins of their fathers; and God seems to teach us a law that the deed once done, like the word once spoken, cannot be recalled. This world, at least, can never be what it would have been had the act not been committed. No message of God's mercy must make us forget this. The consequences of our deeds pass on to others, as the consequences of the deeds of others pass on to ourselves.

But still this law has another side. If we feel sometimes that without fault of our own we have to bear the results of the misdeeds of other people, without any merit of our own again and again we are helped and relieved from the results of what we have done amiss by the self-sacrifice of others. Not long since we read of a servant who saved from a fire the lives of the children intrusted to her, but herself perished in the flames. Not a winter passes without the story of lifeboatmen drowned in their work of rescue. 'Hundreds of men and women gently nurtured, with the choice of an easy life before them,' choose rather 'with cheerful hearts to give up everything in order to nurse the sick, to live with the poor, ay, and as the poor, to be the daily companions of the sick and the miserable.'

These illustrations, imperfect as they are, may show that the atoning death of our Saviour is not contrary to our ideas of justice or to God's laws of governing the world. Day by day we find instances of men of

whom it is no irreverence to say that they save others, themselves they cannot save.

And yet that Death stands quite apart as the one offering for the sins of the world. We must not think of it as being merely the most conspicuous and the most beneficial of all acts of heroic self-sacrifice. They are what they are, not because they imitate, but because they are united with the one perfect and sufficient Sacrifice. It was because our Saviour identified Himself with man that He bore the consequences of all the sins of men, and by bearing their sins He united men to Him. We are baptized into His death. Therefore the sacrifice which man could not make unaided he now can make because his offering is united with Christ's offering, his sacrifice with Christ's sacrifice, his life with Christ's life.

If we believe that God has given to us a priceless gift, it seems our duty, with all reverence and humility, to try and understand what this gift is and how we may receive it. But the chief matter is to believe in the gift itself. It speaks to the heart rather than to the mind. We come back to the simple words of Holy Scripture: 'So God loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' He died for us 'to make us sons of God and heirs of eternal life.' This is the inestimable benefit we must thankfully receive, praying daily that we may have grace to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOLY GHOST

Our Lord also reveals to us, and the Church teaches us to believe in the work of a third Person—**God the Holy Spirit.**

The Nicene Creed speaks of Him as the Lord, the Giver of Life. The great puzzle of science is the beginning of life on our planet. We know no more than what the Bible tells us. At the beginning the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. But there is another life of which we want to know the origin, that which we have called conscious life, the life which can think of itself and of God, the life of the spirit, wherein man differs from the lower animals. This life is the gift of the Holy Ghost. It brought knowledge of self, of God, of duty. This knowledge we have seen checked and darkened by man's disobedience. Man's lower nature continually struggles against the witness of the Holy Spirit. But yet that witness abides in our conscience continually, on its side struggling against the lower nature to prevent us from merely doing the things that we wish. The voice within us which speaks to our mind and reason to tell us what is right and what is wrong, the power which rules our hearts and makes us love the right and hate the wrong, the power which works upon our wills and raises us from dull acquiescence in indolent consent to what is wrong, which gives us vigour to pursue, and

rouses us with power to achieve what is good,—that is the voice and power of the Holy Spirit in our minds and hearts and wills. But this voice can be stifled, this power can be checked, if we are deaf to it and if we oppose it. The act of sin which causes a pang and a shame the first time, is committed more lightly the next, until at last it becomes a matter of course. There is for each one of us the possibility of the mysterious sin against the Holy Spirit of which our Lord speaks, which does not appear to be any particular act, but final persistence in neglect of His pleading, and disbelief in His grace. It is the condition against which the Psalmist prayed: 'Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.'

And the same law holds for the whole race of mankind. God's Spirit will not always strive with man. And though we believe that all good thoughts and good deeds, whether done by heathen or Christians, are prompted by God's Holy Spirit, yet mankind generally was rebellious against God and in a condition in which their hearts could not be open to the teaching, or their lives correspond to the prompting of God the Holy Spirit.

So God's work of redemption begins by His choice of His people Israel, and their special teaching and training by Moses and the prophets. Their history and their words we have in the Bible, which we therefore believe to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. He spake by the prophets; and the purpose of this was that the gift of the Holy Spirit which man had forfeited should be restored. It was this gift which our Lord promised He would send His Church after His Ascension.

We believe, then, that all good thoughts of all good men are moved by the Holy Ghost; that more specially as part of the plan of our redemption the prophets of the

Old Testament spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but yet to His Church at large our Lord Jesus Christ promised a gift which He evidently means to be different from anything the world had known, to guide them into all the truth and to dwell with them for ever. It was not another Spirit, but the same Spirit which had pleaded with man from the beginning. The difference was that it was no longer to be a power working on man from without. It was to be a power dwelling within him and working from within.

We must think of this gift as we receive it ourselves. It is the gift of Baptism and Confirmation. He is still the Lord, the Giver of Life. As He is the Author of life in nature, and the life of man's intellect, so He is the Author of the new life, the life of man's spirit. We are born of water and the Holy Ghost. Our life as members of Christ's Church is His gift. S. Paul calls it the Spirit of adoption, whereby we have, and feel we have, a right to call God our Father. We must not only listen to words which tell us that we are the sons of God; we must have a feeling in our hearts and a deep assurance that this is true; we must feel that we are speaking to God as our Father; we must pray to live the life of sons of God, and recognise this as our destiny and privilege. This it is to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, to bring us to the sense of our high calling in Jesus Christ.

There are three ordinances of the Church in which we receive special gifts of the Holy Spirit - Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination. In Baptism it is the gift of life. Confirmation is the gift of strength for life's duties. In Ordination men are set apart to receive special grace for special duties. They receive from God a mysterious power that they may hand on His gifts to His people. But all faithful Christians are in one sense priests.

When we are taught that all members of Christ's Church are priests, we must think of ourselves in our Confirmation as receiving a mysterious gift to strengthen us for the work in life which God intends us to do for others, and this is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

There is a further work of the Holy Spirit in the Church at large promised by our Lord. This is to guide it into all the truth. It is for this reason we believe what the Church teaches. After our Lord's Ascension the Church in the early ages put into the form of the Creeds the great doctrines of the Christian faith. But just as men lose the guidance of conscience if they are deaf to its warnings, so the Church through its divisions is no longer able to speak with clear authority, as in the early ages it did. We pray for the day when the divisions shall be healed and when the faith shall be held in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

CHAPTER VII

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, ETC.

The Holy Catholic Church. – We must now collect as well as we can what we have learned already, or have to learn, about Christ's Holy Church. It is a society of faithful men and women united in a mysterious union with each other, and with Christ by His death upon the cross. This union is maintained by prayer and the Sacraments; it includes the living and the dead. We speak thus of the visible Church, the Church of the living, and the invisible Church, the great company which no man can number of the faithful who have passed away. Whether they are conscious or not of what we do and suffer, we cannot say; but there seems warrant in Holy Scripture to believe that they pray for us, and that we may offer our prayers for them. We speak also of the saints as the Church triumphant, those who have gained the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and inherit the crown promised to him that overcometh. Those for whom the struggle is still proceeding are the Church militant – an army as well as a brotherhood. The warfare is not merely for the salvation of our own souls. We must think of it as God's war against evil. Evil is met and must be faced first, of course, in our own hearts; but God calls us to fight His cause in the world also. It is thus we feel the Communion of Saints. The battles we are fighting are the battles they fought; the cause is

the same cause, the leader the same leader. We thus feel that we are not alone, and that as they have conquered we have the assurance of victory also. The power which supported them is the power which supports us.

The Church is **Catholic** or universal. It holds all that Christ has taught us to believe. It is for all time, for all persons, all ages, all conditions, all countries. In it the distinctions of rich and poor, young and old, slave and freeman, Englishman and foreigner, are done away. But of the Church there are different branches. Indeed, the word Church is used by S. Paul in the sense of a congregation. Any group of Christian people worshipping together is in this sense a Church. A school worshipping in its chapel is a Church of Christ. We speak also of the Church of England, which is a group of these churches with a common history, the same rule of worship and of government. Just as the parish churches have their life and may vary in the times and in some points of their services, and yet all belong to the Church of England and be in full communion with each other; so the different national churches may have peculiarities of their own and yet all be branches of the Church Catholic and be in communion with one another. But the Church of England has laws which no single congregation has a right to alter. And any congregation professing to belong to the Church of England which yet refused to use, or altered, the Prayer Book, would be separating itself from the Church of England. In the same way, the Church Catholic has its laws which no branch of it has a right to alter. And any national Church which gives up any part of the doctrine or practice of the Catholic Church is so far separating itself from the visible unity of the Church, and this is what we call the sin of schism or separation.

Any Church which adds to the doctrine of the Church universal and refuses to admit to communion those who reject its additions is also guilty of the sin of causing schism or separation. The Church of England holds and teaches all that was held and taught by the undivided Church, and maintains that it is certain that the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope on which the Church of Rome insists was never heard of in those days. It believes too that no Church has a right to make any change in the Sacraments or in the ministry of the Church, and that from the time of the Apostles there have been in the Church the three orders of ministers—bishops, priests, and deacons. The Church is thus Apostolic; it remains, like the early Church, in the Apostles' fellowship, in the doctrine which they taught, and with a ministry connected with them by direct succession. As our Lord appointed His Apostles, so they in their turn laid their hands on others to succeed them, from whom through the same sign of laying on of hands authority has been transmitted in an unbroken line to the bishops who ordain priests to-day.

This ministry we believe our Lord appointed to preserve the visible unity of His Church, and as the channel of conveying His gifts to men. As things are we must confess that the visible unity of the Church is a lost ideal, for the restoration of which we must earnestly pray. But while we keep as clear as we can from condemning others, we must hold to our own convictions that the unity of the Church is a real fact, and the brotherhood a definite brotherhood. It consists in more than reverence for and endeavour to follow the example of our Saviour. There is one Lord, but there is also one Faith and one Baptism; a definite creed handed on to us to hold, a sacramental life given us to share.

But the divisions of the Church hamper and delay her work and, as we have seen, weaken her authority.

Lastly, we speak of the Church as **holy**. This, again, is an ideal imperfectly realised. The Church is holy because it is the sphere of the work of the Holy Spirit; holiness is the law of its life. It is separate from the world. It is in and through the Church that God's victory over evil is to be secured when His Church is presented to Him without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Meantime we, the members of the Church, are also still in the world, still bearing with us the burden of the flesh. There are pledged members of the Church still half-hearted in their allegiance, some, alas! wholly false to their promises and vows. As in our Lord's parable, the tares and the wheat grow together till the harvest, when there will come the final separation.

We need not repeat here the teaching that has elsewhere been given of membership in this body being God's appointed way for giving us that new relation to Himself which brings forgiveness of sin. We will consider the final result of faithful continuance in it, the **resurrection of the body** and the **life everlasting**.

No question has ever roused the wonder and exercised the imagination of mankind more than the world which lies beyond the grave. Men have asked whether death is the end of all; if not, what happened to men? Homer seems to think of ghosts doing in a vague shadowy way much the same things as they did in their lifetime, but with no power, no interest, no joy or satisfaction. The Jews for a long time seemed to have no belief in the existence of any world beyond the grave at all. When man's breath goeth forth, he turneth again to his dust, and all his thoughts perish. We cannot say that belief in the immortality of the soul is universal; the rewards of the Old Testament refer chiefly to this life. Men no

doubt arrived at a belief in immortality partly from the sense that the soul which can hold communion with God, Who is immortal, must be itself immortal; and partly from the sense that there must be another world where the innocent who suffer here receive their reward, and the wicked who enjoy prosperity are punished. But for Christians the belief in another life rests on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He came to show man what God is, but also to show what man himself is, and should be, and shall be. He is spoken of as the firstfruits of the dead, which means that all mankind shall rise some day as He rose. Further, the power which raised Him will raise us, and the change which passed over His body is the change which will pass over ours. S. Paul rests his teaching of the life of the world to come very plainly on the actual fact of our Lord's Resurrection, which he describes in a very solemn way as having been specially 'received' by him. Furthermore, we are to believe not merely in the immortality of the soul, but in the resurrection of the body. We have already seen the importance of this doctrine in practical life. We do not regard our bodies as evil things to be thrown off some day as a snake casts its slough, but as destined to share in our future. As He ascended with our whole nature to heaven, so our whole nature, body, soul, and spirit, is to be redeemed. The spirit of which we always think as associated with our body is not in that other world to be left naked, but to be 'clothed upon,' to have as it were a dwelling-place, a body, which body, though in wholly changed condition, will yet have some mysterious relation to the bodies which we have now. No doubt the doctrine of the resurrection of the body has been taught in foolish and misleading ways. We do not believe in the resurrection of the same material particles which we put into a coffin. It

is horrible to think of the body rising with the marks of pain and sickness which marked it at death. 'We sow not the body which shall be.' It is sown a natural body, and it is raised a spiritual body, changed into the likeness of the body of Christ's glory.

Of the life of the world to come men have been too ready to allow their imagination to draw pictures, in many cases false and misleading, especially as to the existence of a state intermediate between death and judgment. So far as we can see, the Bible speaks of this life as the only period of our probation, nor have we a right to expect any other. But we do not pass at once after death into heaven or hell. There is a place or state of waiting, which we may believe to be rather a condition of training and educating and preparing the soul for the vision of God than a condition of pain. It is a happiness to think that God will thus prepare us to pass into His presence. Nor may we teach beyond what is written of the meaning of heaven and hell. There is the eternal and awful difference between enjoyment of the presence and vision of God, and banishment and separation from Him in outer darkness. The terrors of a material fire may be a misleading interpretation of the figurative language of Holy Scripture, but no words can exaggerate the bitterness of those who in their lost condition realise what opportunity they have lost and what love they have despised. Nor must we interpret literally all the figurative language in which the Book of Revelation describes the Holy City. But it does show us that the condition of happiness of the blessed is not one of inactive repose, but of continuous and happy service. It is the rest for the people of God, because it is no longer rendered through toil and struggle, but happily and perfectly. His servants shall serve Him, and see His face.

CHAPTER VIII

RENUNCIATION

The Enemies of the Kingdom. Strictly speaking, there is one foe, the Devil, our ghostly or spiritual enemy, as the Catechism says. The world and the flesh are instruments which he uses in leading us astray, the influence and example of those about us, the desires which arise within us in our own bodies. These influences and desires are not necessarily bad in themselves; but they may become so, and do become so, when the Devil uses them for his own purpose.

And the Devil has a purpose. Why God permits personal beings to oppose His will and loving purpose we cannot say. The Bible says little on this point. Only in the Book of the Revelation of S. John do we read of the war in heaven between S. Michael and the Devil, and the Devil being cast out into the bottomless pit. Milton has developed this idea in the poem of 'Paradise Lost,' and a great part of our ordinary ideas on this matter are derived from Milton, and not from the Bible. But our Lord Himself and His Apostles so clearly teach the existence of personal evil spirits that we are bound to follow their teaching. Furthermore, our own experience in temptation seems to show the attack of a malignant personal enemy. The Devil represents all that is contrary to the nature of God, and schemes to overthrow all the purposes of God. We

renounce the Devil and all his works. When we disobey God we obey the Devil, and submit our being to his rule. His servants we are to whom we obey.

The special works of the Devil are :—

1. Finding satisfaction in, or trying in any way to bring about, harm to other people. If we allow ourselves to feel satisfaction when we hear of the misfortunes of others, it is the first step towards trying to bring it about; and this is the characteristic work of the Devil. This harm we effect most surely and certainly by tempting others. We speak of the Devil by a special name, the Tempter; and as we think of our duty to leave the world better than we find it, we recognise that to leave it worse is the work of the Devil, which we renounce. This is done not only in the worst way, by deliberately leading others into wrong, but also by bad example and influence, by thoughtless words and acts, the effect of which we often do not recognise until it is too late. Furthermore, many an earnest effort and kind action is prevented or spoiled by cynical ridicule or contemptuous laughter. It is hard enough in any case to do our duty. We are too apt to think that it is not worth while, and that what we can do is not worth doing. Everything which encourages our laziness, our distrust of ourselves, our fear of being ridiculous, is the Devil's work for stopping what God is asking from us.

2. **Falsehood**, again, is specially the work of the Devil. He is the father of lies. He deceives us as to the value of the things we pursue and the result of our actions. It is so in the story of the Fall. He persuaded Adam and Eve that death would not be the result of disobedience. 'Ye shall not surely die.' It is the Devil's work to persuade us that unworthy things are to be pursued, and that dishonourable tricks are honest.

3. Last, come **Pride** and **Presumption**. We should

notice that the three temptations of our Lord correspond to our three spiritual enemies—the flesh, the world, and the Devil; and the temptation of the Devil occurs in the form of presumption—to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, trusting to the protection and guardianship of His Father. In Holy Scripture, side by side with the threats of God's judgments, we read the assurance of His tender mercy and His love. We are too ready to forget the former, and to presume on the latter—to trust that whatever we do, some opportunity will be found us some day, and that the sentence of God's anger upon the wicked will be averted from ourselves; that we shall not surely die. The sin of presumption leads us in this way to continue in evil practices, and to cling to evil habits, trusting that they may not have for us the consequences we know they have had for others, or that something will occur to break off the evil habit without struggle or effort of our own. Further, it leads us to tamper with evil, to enjoy the society of people we know to be vicious because they are amusing, to indulge our curiosity, and in what we read or look at, or do, especially in matters of sensual indulgence, to claim for ourselves wide liberty, and to carry the limits of what is permitted so far that we find we are swept away before we are aware of it into sins from which we should once have shrunk with horror and disgust.

The sin of pride consists in a wholly false idea of our position in the world, of what is due to us from others, and what is due to others from ourselves. By this sin fell the angels. We do not see the nature and the origin or the purpose of the gifts that we possess. There is, of course, what we call a true pride. It is no part of our duty to represent our gifts as less than they are, or if God has given us great intellectual power, to pretend

that we have no more ability than the average person. It is indeed our duty to God to reverence His gifts and to thank Him for them, to be proud of the position to which He has called us, and the opportunities of service which He has intrusted to us.

False pride consists, first, in the exaggeration of these gifts, in imagining they are greater than they really are; secondly, in forgetting that they are gifts; thirdly, in imagining that by the mere fact of having some ability or capacity above the average we are therefore necessarily better men. It may be, and often is, just the other way. Our true self, our true character, is not affected by the possession of any gift, but by the use we make of it. A cricketer is no better man for being a cricketer; and if on the score of any superior gift we allow ourselves to become arrogant, dictatorial, and self-assertive, to claim a deference from, and to assert our superiority over, those with whom we come in contact, the gift which should have been a blessing becomes fatal to its possessor, and an offence and hindrance to other people. The highest ambition of a Christian should be to become the servant of the servants of God. And when we once recognise that all we are and all we have is the gift of God, there should not be room in our hearts for any thought except the humble confession how little we have made of it.

The World.—Three temptations seem to come to us by the direct suggestion of the spirit of evil—pride, lying, the working of injury to others. We come now to temptations which come to us (*a*) through the agency of those around us, the world; (*b*) from the natural desires of our own bodies, the flesh. It is well to understand exactly what we mean by the world. The world is exactly the opposite of the Church, and both are societies of men and women. But just as the Church consists

of those who are united to Christ and each other by the Sacrament of Baptism and the life of grace, so by the world we mean men and women living and acting together without thought of His will, or recognised influence of His Spirit. If we find any group of people, boys or men, women or children, no matter how small, living together, working together, and associated in amusements and occupation, without ever guiding their common life by Christ's rule and commandments, there we have the world. This is the life which we renounce with its 'pomps and vanities.' That means the things in it which are showy and outwardly attractive, but have no kind of permanent good.

Now we must remember that the works of the Devil are things which are always and necessarily bad. The world tempts us with things which are not in themselves bad, but which become so when we use them in a wrong way, for wrong ends, at wrong times, or to a wrong extent. They are mainly four—**Pleasure, Honour, Riches, Power.**

1. The law of our life being Purpose and Service, pleasure and amusement have their place as the condition of power to do our work. They are therefore not only lawful, but necessary. But we must consider our whole life, and ask what we are doing with it, whether we have really grasped the duty of working for God first, and put pleasure into its proper place as fitting us for it, or whether pleasure is, as it too often is found to be, the chief object of our days, and work a mere unpleasant necessity to be avoided as far as possible. Most people are bound to work to get their own living. They must ask whether they think of work only so, or whether they do it gladly as a duty to God, and not as an accidental necessity. We can be proud of the call to work, diligent, honest, careful. The lesson to be learned at school is

thoroughness and conscientiousness, the duty of never leaving a task undone or half done, because the temptation of some game or amusement occurs to distract and delay. Pride in work, in the call to work, in the excellence of our work, is the true preservation against the wrong use of pleasure.

As to the nature of amusement, it is difficult to lay down general rules. It is, of course, plain that some kinds of amusement—races, music-halls, cards, billiards—have ruined lives and characters. In the *Pilgrim's Progress* Christian found roads marked with skeletons of travellers. Such roads must always be trodden with care. There is, no doubt, a path of safety. There is nothing in itself more improper in a horse race than in a boat race: the mischief lies in association: and the ordinary gatherings of racecourses and music-halls are hardly calculated to raise our ideals or help our efforts. The question we have to ask in reference to any kind of pleasure is whether it helps us to make the best of our lives, or whether it lowers and degrades them.

2. Power, riches, and honour may be treated together. In themselves they are neither good nor bad. They must not therefore be the main object of our lives. Men are by no means necessarily happier because they are rich, and certainly not necessarily better. They belong to the things which we see, the things of this life which are for a time, and which pass away, and which have no value of their own which is permanent. We see plainly that sometimes these rewards appear to fall to very unworthy people, while to high character and service they often are denied. They cannot, therefore, be God's best gifts: for His faithful servants He reserves far higher rewards. They are, however, good gifts, and bring clear possibility both of happiness and usefulness. We must think of them so, and thank God if He gives

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us any part of them. They become 'pomps and vanities' when we see them in a false light, and regard them as the main object of our lives. We are then tempted to sacrifice everything in order to secure them, and to use them wrongly when we have secured them. It was thus our Lord was tempted to secure the kingdoms of the world by worshipping the Devil. We are tempted in the same way. A tradesman or a company promoter who makes money by cheating or misrepresentation, a statesman who tries to secure office by appealing to prejudices which he knows are base, and advocating popular measures which he knows are unwise, adopt the Devil's road to power and wealth. Power and honour in school life are represented by influence and popularity. There are no greater opportunities either of happiness or service. But neither must be pursued deliberately. They come or do not come as God wills. If we set ourselves intentionally to gain popularity, and make this a cherished ambition, we shall certainly be tempted to adopt low standards, to wink at low practices, to avoid unpleasant but obvious duties, because opposition to ordinary customs is unpopular, and interference resented as unnecessary. There is the further temptation to do and say ourselves things which in our better moments we despise, because they may win a flashy and yet attractive popularity.

The Flesh. - Last comes the flesh with its sinful lusts. Lust means simply desire; and the desire of the flesh for rest and for food is not only not sinful, but plainly necessary. Our Lord's hunger in His temptation was natural. He was tempted to satisfy it in a way contrary to the conditions of His life on earth. The feeling of desire is not evil. It is evil to satisfy it in improper ways, or to an improper extent. The three deadly sins of the flesh are sloth, gluttony, impurity. They are, we know,

contemptible vices, but we must avoid them not by looking down to see how contemptible they are, but by looking up to the ideal which we are created to fulfil. Even for the pagan there was an ideal—the physical beauty and strength of the body; nor is this thought to be despised. Fresh athletic vigour, sound health, and training, the condition which we call 'fitness,' is a thing to be proud of, as the sodden, bloated body of the glutton, the drunkard, and the sluggard is to be despised. The sound mind in the sound body is the condition of all healthy energy and activity. Next comes the ideal of the man of the world—fitness and keenness for necessary duties, the consciousness of self-mastery, the control of passion. But these ideals are insufficient, and also may be dangerously deceiving. The pagan and Greek ideal left room for many degrading vices, and the man who prides himself in his own self-mastery finds not seldom that his confidence rests on a most unsure foundation. The Christian ideal does not set aside these thoughts, but it goes much higher. No doubt vice weakens our bodies and enfeebles our minds, and the terrible consequences of sensual indulgence are God's warnings against it. But there are some vices which men may commit which might perhaps enfeeble the body very little. The Christian must remember that Jesus Christ by taking upon Himself a human body, and by ascending to heaven with that body glorified, has given to our bodies an honour of which the heathen have no idea. If we in our bodies follow the suggestions of the Devil, we make ourselves his servants and slaves, we lose our self-respect, but we lose our destiny also. We believe in the resurrection of the body. Jesus Christ Himself shall change what S. Paul calls the body of our humiliation that it may be made like His glorious body. It is well to think of what we may call 'training'

our bodies, but the training is a very different thing from training a horse for a race. There nothing is thought of but the body itself. Our bodies are governed by the higher law of the spirit, to which they are united, of God's Holy Spirit Who comes to dwell within us, and the life of the spirit with which they will be associated, as we hope and pray, in heaven. On this ideal we should fix our hearts, but still we need in everyday life careful and watchful guidance.

Sloth does not mean only getting up late in the morning; it hinders all the activities of life. The loafer is the curse of public school life. It is not difficult to understand a boy neglecting work for a game in which he is keenly interested. But the loafer is not interested in anything, and will make no effort for anything; and unless the spark of interest is kindled, he will go through the world a useless incumbrance. The first remedy against sloth, therefore, is to awaken some keen interest and enthusiasm, to have some object dear enough to awake keen effort to secure it. The next remedy is, as Thomas à Kempis says, to be hard with ourselves; to watch where the sin of sloth is getting hold of us; to make rules of life as to time of rising, and time of work, and to vary them, of course, from time to time, but to keep them rigidly. The rules which others make for us at school we shall be wise to make for ourselves when we are independent.

The temptation to **gluttony** is perhaps more definite in the young. Many spend a great deal more on eating and drinking than they should, and have certainly not reached a condition of mastery over their desires. No one can pretend that it is other than contemptible thus to be the slave of the appetite, or that we should not as early as possible learn the lesson of restraint and self-control. The healthier a boy is in mind and body,

the more he despises daintiness and greediness. In maturer years the danger of excess lies chiefly with smoking and drinking. There are some who maintain that tobacco and alcohol are altogether and always wrong. For such statement there is no authority. Smoking is wrong when there is lost the sense of restraint and self-control. The first restraint is the ordinary law of health, and many people are such slaves to the habit that they indulge it to an extent which they know is harmful. The other is the convenience of other people and the conventions of society. It is an obvious duty to be so far independent of the pleasure that we are not tempted to indulge it when there is any danger of its proving a nuisance to others, or a discredit to ourselves.

Alcoholic drinks for ordinary people are neither necessary nor wrong. As one of the pleasures of life the Bible undoubtedly recognises them, for particular needs of health it clearly advises them. Men should abstain altogether if they find any danger of excess. But clergy in their parishes and those who work for temperance find total abstinence necessary to their work; and many masters have done the same as an example to their servants, or to keep particular people in whom they are interested from a deadly vice. Pleasure is a gift of God. It is not His will that we should give it up merely for the sake of giving it up. We should do so for two reasons: first, for our own discipline; secondly, in charity to others. Where the indulgence in our own pleasure is in any degree likely to cause harm to anybody, there it is wrong. It is also wrong if it hinders us from doing the good we otherwise might do. Drunkenness, like gambling, is such a curse to our country that nobody dare be indifferent to it. We are all bound to ask ourselves what we can do to

check it, and to leave nothing undone which God has placed within our power to check it.

We should remember in this connection the Church's rule of fasting. The practice rests on a direct command of our Lord Himself, and supplies a real spiritual need. We can practise control of our enjoyment and use of lawful pleasure in food and drink by giving it up at certain times. These times are suggested to us by our Prayer Book. The Church leaves us large liberty as to the way in which we observe days of fasting and abstinence; we should try and see the purpose they serve, and regulate our practice accordingly. All are not equally able to give up meat. But some can do this, and some can give up wine. The rule, at all events, should not be set aside as in any way useless or obsolete.

Sloth, gluttony, and drunkenness are chief incentives to impurity. This is the most deadly sin of the flesh. It involves most deliberate and conscious disobedience to God's law, and more than anything else brings our higher nature into slavery to our lower nature. Man's true destiny is to move upward, working out and conquering lust and cruelty—the passions of the ape and the tiger. Impurity gives us over to them. Probably the victory comes to no one without a struggle. The struggle is keener for some than for others, but definite for all. One or two counsels may not be out of place. We must first look up to love and desire the clean heart. Those that love God will hate the thing that is evil. We must not begin with the thought of our own strength or dignity, however degrading and humiliating indulgence may be. Secondly, we must prepare for the struggle when we are alone, in solitude. Here is the true gift of the religious life—the sense of the presence of a Master and a Friend. Our thoughts, our actions when we are quite alone are the true test of our character

and our religion, our sense of God's presence, our sense of duty to Him. Thirdly, we must close the way to the Devil's methods of attack by opportunity and suggestion. The suggestion may come by evil companions, books, pictures. We must realise at once the way we are being led, and turn back at once when we find we have entered on the way of danger. One great opportunity is the empty mind, the unemployed hour. Occupation and interest are the safeguard against this. But do what we will, there are times when we are left unemployed. In these we must have a store of wholesome thoughts and hopes and memories. The plans of what we may do in the world, the memories of games and holidays and experiences of the past, will fill the blanks of idle hours. Many men have carefully kept passages of poetry which they have learned, or of the Psalms, or the Bible, that they may never be left without something to fill and occupy their minds.

Lastly, we must remember that association in impurity is the way by which we do most deadly injury to each other, and drag our neighbour on the road to death. We must hold the ideal of purity not only for ourselves, but for others. It is the truth that we all must struggle; it is the Devil's lie that most are defeated. 'To the pure all things are pure,' does not mean that we may venture into any society without risk of falling. It does mean that the man or boy who is fighting against vice, and by the grace of God overcoming it, believes that the men and women about him are fighting and winning their battle also, and has a reverence for the ideal of true manhood and true womanhood, which he will not allow himself even by a thought to profane.

CHAPTER IX

THE COMMANDMENTS

The Laws of the Kingdom.—The Catechism tells us that these are *the same* which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. It might surprise us that no other laws have been given to us than those given to the Israelites so long ago. We believe that the world has advanced since then, and that our Lord gave His disciples a new commandment.

We therefore take this opportunity of explaining what is meant by the Old Testament and the inspiration of the Old Testament, of which the Commandments form a part.

In the first place, we learn that God's method of dealing with men has been continuous and uniform, never ceasing, never changing. God has one plan. He chooses particular people and particular nations for the work which He has to be done. To teach the world art, He chose the Greeks; to teach ordered government and law, He chose the Romans; to reveal the truths of His own nature and will, He made choice of Israel. But as this purpose was so much higher than all other purposes, those chosen for it are called specially chosen people, a peculiar people, God's own possession, His elect, His Church. His relation to them was closer than to any other nation; it is called the Covenant, or, as we say, the Testament. This covenant, as we have already seen,

does not mean a bargain as between equals, but simply God's gracious choice and determination to give to one people a great gift for a great purpose, and the corresponding duty on the part of the people to show their gratitude and to fulfil the purpose. It was this gift, as S. Paul tells us, which gave to Israel much advantage every way, and the gift was that they were intrusted with the oracles of God. The Old Testament, then, tells us how God revealed Himself to His people in old time. It shows us how they thought of Him first almost under the fashion of a man, and endeavoured to please Him in ways natural to an ignorant and passionate tribe. But God led them and guided them to a Promised Land; He gave them a law and an ordered worship; He sent His servants the prophets to teach His will. In these four points—its history, its religious ceremonial, its law, its teachers—Israel was like no nation upon earth. But all this training was merely a preparation for something to come — God's last message to man, His complete revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ.

We see, further, not merely that the history of Israel is more interesting, its laws more humane, its sacrifices more reasonable, its prophets more eloquent than those of other nations, but rather that every one of these features is incapable of explanation by itself; they are all obviously looking forward to something in the future, without which they are incomplete and unintelligible, as the foundation of a house left abandoned and unfinished. Our Lord constantly says He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. He shows to His disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. He says He must die, or the Scriptures would not be fulfilled. He appeals to the things written in the Law and in the Prophets concerning Him. It is this which makes the Bible one book. It consists, of course, of many books,

but they tell of one Spirit and one purpose. As a butterfly develops from a chrysalis, so it has been said the New Testament lies hid in the Old; the meaning of the Old Testament is explained in the New.

This connection, then, is no accident. The Christian Church uses the Psalter, which was the Hymn Book of the Jewish Church, because the Spirit which teaches us to come to God inspired the saints of old time also.

The whole history of Israel is a parable or type of the history of the Christian Church and of our own lives as no other history is. It starts with the Red Sea, which is the nation's baptism, its separation from evil, its beginning of a new life. It passes on to Sinai, which corresponds to our Confirmation, the acceptance of a law, the consecration for a life of duty and devotion. Nowhere else is there such a picture of Divine leading and guidance, of Divine support, as in the pillar of cloud and fire, the food from heaven, and the water from the mount of God. And from the earliest times Canaan has foreshadowed to the Church the rest which remains for the people of God.

It is no accident that the Jewish worship, with its day of Atonement, its Passover, and its ritual of sacrifice, should find its explanation in Christ, our Passover, Who was sacrificed for us, and the feasts which the Church is ordered to observe.

So not by accident, but from God's own purpose, the law given in the Ten Commandments is such that it could grow and develop into the New Commandment of the kingdom of heaven.

But the Jews misunderstood it.

First, they thought God chose them for some merits of their own; and, no matter what they did, was bound by His promise to continue His favour. We are tempted also to regard our privileges so. They come to us of

God's grace, that we may use them for His service, or we shall lose them through His displeasure. We do not earn God's forgiveness by what we do. He calls us to be His children, and then we owe Him all we have.

Secondly, the Jews tried to earn God's favour as cheaply as possible. Thinking that nothing was required of them except to keep the law, they kept strictly to what it said, and did not care to ask what it meant. They did not understand that the spirit in which a thing is done is the chief thing with God—the desire to love Him and serve Him. God looks at the heart within. Hence arose all the petty rules and evasions which our Lord condemned—the tradition which made the Word of God of none effect. We must not be like children, who desire to do the very thing their parents wish them not to do without exactly disobeying the precise words of their orders. Our desire must be to do all God's will, and to use His commandments as telling us what that will is. Therefore, in interpreting the Commandments, we must remember—(1) That God's law is positive. We must do right, it is not enough to avoid wrong. (2) It deals with motive and desires, not merely with outward acts. (3) All we can do is to show our gratitude and thankfulness to God, we can never make any claim upon Him.

The First Commandment.—*Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.*

It is quite clear that the Jews at first believed that there were many gods; but their God, Jehovah, was the holiest, the highest, and the best. Deliberately to choose and to worship another god would be forsaking the higher for the lower. This they did again and again. It was the sin of Ahab to worship Baal and Ashtaroth, divinities which for a long time had a strange attraction

for the Israelites, partly because of the foul and impure nature of their worship.

God represents to us the highest and best that we know. This we must make the object and ambition of our lives. We know quite well that riches and pleasure and popularity are not the highest things in the world. It is the highest which demands our worship, our reverence, and our love. When we devote our lives and our efforts to pursuing lower and meaner ends, when, for example, we deliberately do something dishonourable or degrading rather than lose a pleasure or sacrifice a chance of gain, then we are worshipping a false god, bowing down, as the Bible says, in the house of Rimmon.

This is a point which must be made quite clear. Boys for the most part, in their better moments, really desire to do the right thing. In the men they see around them, in what they read in history, their reverence and admiration are given to what is generous, pure, brave, and self-sacrificing. They admire things worthy of admiration, and reverence things that deserve reverence. Their heart, so to say, is in the right place. But other and lower things are continually attracting them and leading them astray, and they follow, not without shame and keen sorrow and repentance. But if this continues, the moment comes when the lower things turn out the higher and really become the ideal of life. The mere pushing man of the world, or the mere sportsman, or the mere athlete, or the mere man of pleasure, represents to them all they care about or desire to be. They forget the earlier and more generous ambitions and the visions of their boyhood. The first commandment has vanished out of sight.

And this is because they have forgotten that God is not merely an ideal; He is a Person, a loving, tender Father. It is our duty not merely to reverence goodness,

where we see it amongst men, not merely to think that self-mastery is a noble thing for ourselves, but to believe in God, the all-holy and the loving Friend, and to love Him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and all our strength. We break the first commandment, then, when we lower our ideals of life and deliberately follow the worse instead of the better; when we covet earnestly not the best things, but the worse things in life; and instead of thinking on things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, turn to the false, the commercial, the cheating, the foul, the unseemly, the discreditable. This is to love darkness rather than light, to have seen and to hate our Lord and His Father.

The Second Commandment.—We see in the Bible how God gradually taught His people to think of Him as a Spirit. Part of this teaching is contained in the commandment not to worship Him under the form of any graven image or likeness of material things. The first commandment forbade the forsaking of Jehovah for other gods; by the second the Jews were taught not to have degrading ideas of the nature of God, or to worship Him under dishonouring forms. It was this commandment which was broken by Aaron and by Jeroboam, neither of whom intended in any way to forsake Jehovah for any other divinity.

The breach of the second commandment is the first step towards breaking the first.

Even when we want, or think we want to do our duty, and to serve God, we are tempted to take a lower idea of our duty and of God's requirements than we ought to do. We are too easy with ourselves, and make our own standards of what we think right and proper; and if we fulfil that, we are satisfied, and think that God should be satisfied also. The temptation is specially strong to accept the standard of the circle in which we live.

Every society or house, a school, a regiment or a college, a profession or the Stock Exchange, has its standard of what it expects. This often allows things that should not be allowed, and nearly always leaves out a very great deal which should be included. If we wish to worship God and serve Him, it must be with our whole heart; we must not keep a little secret longing for something which is forbidden, or be satisfied with any standard below our Lord's command to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect.

We have spoken of worship as meaning more than saying our prayers in church; it includes the reverence and devotion of our whole lives to God. But, of course, we must see how the commandment applies to what we commonly call worship. It does not in any way forbid the introduction of works of art, pictures, statues, or painted glass into our churches. If the devotion of any one is quickened by the figure of our crucified Redeemer, it is monstrous to suppose any idolatry is paid to the actual material figure. There is, however, a danger that the externals of religion—ceremonial, music, and even the beauty of our churches—may draw our attention from Him to Whom our worship should be paid. We may deceive ourselves and imagine we are worshipping God when we are really only interested in some accidental accompaniment.

The danger of formality is much the same. The religious life, like every other part of life, must have its forms and its rules. We may go to church, we may read the Bible, we may say our prayers at regular times, we may keep the holy days of the Church, and observe all her rules of fasting and abstinence, and yet never really approach the throne of God or offer to Him one single heartfelt petition. The first commandment tells us to worship God alone; the second that we must worship Him perfectly, in spirit and in truth.

The Third Commandment bids us reverence the name of God. The Jews gave to this commandment a very narrow and literal interpretation. They regarded with such awe the letters which composed the sacred name of Jehovah that they never pronounced them, and even in writing so changed them that it is not quite certain what the proper letters are.

We understand by the name of God all that represents to us His power and person and character. We are to 'honour His holy Name and His Word.' The commandment, therefore, bids us in our acts, in our words, in our thoughts, to admit nothing inconsistent with reverence for the true object of our worship, never to behave or to speak, or even to think, in a way which would indicate that we do not care about the things we do care about, or honour what we really and earnestly honour. If there is any quality which we admire, any principle we believe in, any duty which we think we are bound to perform, then we must not treat it lightly ourselves, or let others treat it lightly either. Outward behaviour is a test of inward feeling; at all events, we are not likely to continue to reverence things or people to which we allow ourselves to behave with indifference and disrespect.

With our national hatred of hypocrisy and pretence, and our dislike of displaying our feelings, we are sometimes apt to err on the other side, and pretend not to feel what we do feel. This is the least despicable kind of irreverence, but we must honour our principles; and if we do not wish to make ourselves out better than we are, there is no reason why we should appear worse. Besides, this attitude passes very easily into the lower form of being ashamed of our principles, and of being afraid to stand up for them through fear of being laughed at, if not molested.

There is also the irreverence of cheap witticism and the depreciatory sneer. These are suggested by the desire of display, by flashy cleverness, by desire to attract attention, sometimes by sheer conceit and unwillingness to acknowledge excellence in others, or laziness and disinclination to recognise a call for effort to imitate and follow what is noble. These are the commonest forms of breach of the third commandment. No doubt some enthusiasm in the world is misdirected, and some people in honest efforts to do right may make themselves ridiculous. But the only hope we have of lifting ourselves up to what is noble is by feeling how much there is in the world above us, and learning to love and admire it; when we merely criticise and jeer we check our own noblest instincts, and discourage and check the efforts of those around us.

And God is the highest of all. He bids us come to Him in full confidence, but not carelessly, lightly, or thoughtlessly. He does not ask extravagant prostration; but yet the hurried unprepared prayer, the crouching, lounging attitudes too often seen in church, are not reverent, or even decent. Two outward signs of reverence are typically English, ordered by a canon of the Church, and never abandoned in some college chapels and village churches—the bowing of the head at the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also towards the altar in entering and leaving the church. The outward signs matter little if the reverence be in the heart. But they cannot be lightly set aside when we remember how often we bring into the house of God and allow to interfere with our worship of God thoughts and distractions which have no place there. There must be places and times holy to God into which nothing lower is allowed to intrude, and which are separate from all meaner associations. This must guide us in our treatment of the Bible. We must

read it and interpret it naturally and straightforwardly. We must reverence the Bible itself, not any particular view about the Bible; for it is God's message to man, it is the book which is loved and reverenced by millions as no other book has been or can be. Its words are the food of our holiest and best moments, and then it is a pain and sorrow to find rising in our memory silly jests which have been linked to sacred words. Even the material book claims some special care, and it is a help in later years to keep and to read the actual volume, be it Bible or book of devotion, which is associated with the memories of early days.

Again, the third commandment is sometimes read, 'Thou shalt not use the name of Jehovah thy God to deceive.' We are sometimes asked what commandment forbids lying. We say no one commandment directly, but several indirectly, not least the third. We may not take the name of God lightly upon our lips. 'Mon Dieu' may be a natural phrase to a Frenchman. We may be thankful that the corresponding phrase shocks us as irreverent in English. But we ought to be equally shocked at other forms of swearing, even when the actual name of God is not mentioned. And when the name is used as an appeal, when we state on oath in the name of God and as in the presence of God what we know to be false, we try to make God a liar. And even without oath, if we pledge our word, that word carries the weight of our character, and our name, the name of a son of God and an inheritor of His kingdom, which may not be profaned or degraded by a lie.

Of the **Fourth Commandment** less need be said. It is the only one which we do not obey in the letter as well as in the spirit. The obligation to observe the seventh day is abolished; and the obligation to observe the first day is a new obligation. We are not guided in

our observance of Sunday by what the Jews did or did not do on the Sabbath. The observance of Sunday is a direction of the Christian Church just as much as the observance of other holy days. But it has the highest authority of them all, as it dates from the Apostles of our Lord. The rule for us rests on two general principles.

First, the need of rest. In France at the Revolution an effort was made to abolish the Christian day of rest. It was found impossible. It is our bounden duty to secure, as far as we can, Sunday as a day of rest for others, and to give as little occasion for labour as may be.

Second, comes the duty of worship; this has the first claim upon our leisure. It is as an opportunity for worship that rest is ordained, and the centre of worship is the Communion Service. Beyond these two principles nothing further can be laid down. In different countries and different parts of the Church very various opinions have been held, and very various customs have prevailed, with reference to Sunday observance, and to a certain extent each must judge for himself. But he should judge and determine carefully, and not merely do as his own inclination or the custom of his society directs. Every one should make a clear rule for himself as to what he will do and will not do on Sunday, and steadfastly keep it.

It is clear that our national reverence for Sunday has given a strength and seriousness to our national character. This tradition is not lightly to be set aside, and we ought as a nation to cling to it, and each of us separately should remember and respect the discipline in which his childhood was brought up.

Without deciding what amusements are lawful or unlawful on Sunday, it is plain that the day must not be a day of mere frivolity. If we want to make the best

of ourselves, Sunday gives an opportunity which cannot be passed by. Apart from what we call religious books, there is a whole world of literature which at a distance we respect, about which we really think we ought to know something, in which when it comes in our way we find a real delight, and which still from pure indifference we neglect for the casual novel. It is well to make some method and rule for such reading on Sunday.

The fourth commandment indeed teaches us reverence for our time, to remember that time is God's gift, and we owe an account of it to Him. Some times He bids us consecrate more especially to Him, that the whole of our days may derive purpose and uplifting. All this means discipline and trouble. We must regulate our time, keep sacred times of daily prayer and devotion, and times for meditation and reading the Bible. There are the days appointed by the Church to be observed as fasts and festivals. All these have their meaning for the religious life. And, above all, there is Sunday, the weekly festival of the Resurrection.

The Fifth Commandment.—We come now to the commandments which teach us our duty to our neighbour, the first of which is the only commandment with promise.

The Catechism tells us that the duty of respect and obedience extends beyond our parents to the King and all in authority, our teachers, masters, and our betters.

The first condition of life we know is our home; the first duty of life, obedience. Obedience is God's law. He reveals Himself to us as our Father, and through our duty to our parents we learn our duty to Him. We cannot live or learn or grow without obedience. We must accept this not as a bondage from which we want to be free, but as God's appointed method for our

support and education. In this we must be ready and willing, not grudging and under compulsion. We must not try to shirk or to evade, nor to do as little as will be accepted. We must obey what we know is meant, not making excuses from what is actually said. We must obey when we are not watched, when we are left to ourselves and to our own sense of duty, even more scrupulously than when we are under our parents' eyes.

Next follow school, teachers, pastors and masters, the clergy.

They, from their position, have a claim to respect and obedience. Such respect is due to the office irrespective of the person. Discipline is here also the first condition of progress. Not only is school *morale* undermined by insubordination, but the instinct of disobedience is ruinous to individual character. We cannot, of course, give the tribute of our admiration to what is mean or selfish or ungenerous, whatever the position or rank of the person may be. But there are two instincts in human nature—one to admire, the other to criticise and depreciate. Criticism has its place, but it is lower and later. Our Lord tells us to judge not, that we be not judged; and a poet of our own reminds us that we live by admiration, hope, and love, by believing the best, hoping the best of our fellow-men, and endeavouring to lift our lives to what they show us of God's law. Our hope of rising to better things is the belief that others have risen to better things; and this assurance must vanish from our minds if we get into the habit of regarding those around us, and specially those set over us, as no better than anybody else.

Lastly, comes our duty to the State. Here also the first condition of happiness is a strong, ordered government; and this rests on our belief that loyalty is a duty in

itself, not merely something which may serve our own interest. Loyalty has prompted many of the noblest acts in history; and though there are times when we cannot help sympathising with the struggle for liberty, yet we must remember that the struggle for liberty can have no place where things are ordered for the best, and there loyalty finds its noblest exercise because it exists with the truest freedom. Even to the Emperor Nero S. Peter orders obedience, and those who render it he describes as free. And the Catechism recognises not only the King as supreme, but also the existence of classes and grades of society. It is part of our duty to order ourselves lowly and reverently to our betters. This does not mean those whom we choose to regard as men of better character than ourselves, but those in what the world agrees to consider a higher position. That some positions are higher than others is an obvious fact; to say all men are equal is plainly untrue. The Church bids us adopt towards those above us the attitude and behaviour natural to our respective stations. It does not tell us to be subservient, or servile, or cringing; it does not tell us to forget what belongs to our own position, to fawn on or to flatter the great. But it does condemn the arrogant assertion of an equality which does not exist, the ill-mannered refusal of customary and natural marks of respect. Character, of course, is the first thing that claims our respect; but age and rank, dignity, and even wealth, have claims also; and the world is no better, and we are no happier, if we refuse to recognise them. This we can do without forfeiting one iota of our self-respect. Rules of good manners must regulate the intercourse of society, and the intercourse between master and servant cannot be on terms of absolute equality. This implies the duty not only of the inferior to the superior, but of the upper classes to

the lower. This we sometimes forget, and behave to servants as though our position were due to some merit of our own or some fault of theirs. They are treated too often with arrogance and unkindness, assailed with contemptuous abuse, ordered hither and thither with little consideration and regard. If we thus forget our duties to them, it is not surprising that they forget what is due to us.

The Sixth Commandment.—In early times it was necessary to teach the absolute sacredness of human life. Our Lord Himself teaches us how much more we must learn from this commandment—to avoid the hasty impatient thought of anger, the angry contemptuous speech, the sullen, resentful, unforgiving temper, the blow of hasty passion no less than the cool deliberate scheme for the injury of a foe, to hurt nobody by word or deed, to bear no malice or hatred in our heart.

Anger is counted as one of the deadly sins, because it is the contradiction of love, which is the supreme law of the kingdom. Love worketh no ill to its neighbour, and desires always the good of its neighbour. Malice and hatred are the fruits of anger, and result in the temper which even the Greeks regarded as the meanest of all—the temper which delights in seeing the misfortunes of other people, and even deliberately plans and schemes to do them harm.

Short of this there is the brooding over wrongs whether real or imaginary, the breach of kindly intercourse, the refusal to make up a quarrel or to forgive an injury. Here, again, we come to a first principle of the Church. It is a brotherhood; to be in charity with all men is the condition of joining in the Holy Communion, or indeed of offering the prayer of the Church that we may be forgiven as we forgive. The deadliness of the sin of anger, therefore, lies in deliberately and obstinately

cherishing and persisting in what we know perfectly well is contrary to the first conditions of the society of which we are pledged members.

Hot temper stands in a somewhat different position. Some, no doubt, are more tempted this way than others; but no temptations attack all people equally. And most of us have known men in whom natural hot temper has been brought under admirable control by exercise of the will and the power of God's Spirit. There is indeed hardly any sin over which our power of control is so plain and unquestionable; there is no sin which, if unchecked, shows itself in such obvious and unmistakable ways. It produces, of course, sometimes hasty and unconsidered actions, and constantly wild, and perhaps blasphemous words.

We may think of this as degrading to our self-respect. It is the shallow, petty nature which is most easily stirred; nor can a high-minded man be content that men should see him passionately moved by some trivial and, perhaps, accidental circumstance quite beyond his power of self-control. The consideration of common prudence and decency should be sufficient to exercise some check upon the temper; but this, of course, does not go to the root of the matter. Our Lord tells us that we shall give account for every idle word; and that because idle words, the words we speak in hot temper, when we are taken off our guard, are the revelation of the nature which lies within. The words come not from the lips, but from the heart; and words too often reveal a heart thinking only of its own importance, its own convenience, and resenting every interference with it, and perhaps a heart that recognises no restraint of reverence for God, the decencies of society, or the natural claims and feelings of other people.

Lastly, S. Paul bids us be angry and sin not. Are

there any occasions on which anger is right? As nations may fight in a righteous cause, men may be angry in a righteous cause also. As a rule, however, such cause is an injury and injustice not affecting ourselves. No one could blame a boy who fought a bully in defence of a smaller boy; and acts of injustice and cruelty give right occasion for anger. So far as injuries to ourselves are concerned, our Lord gives us a direction to endeavour to make up the quarrel, then, if we fail, to refer it to external authority.

The Seventh Commandment.—Two things are put before us as too sacred to admit of any doubt or argument. The first is human life, the second is marriage. The Church permits no violation, and protects both by forbidding in the one case any thought or word of anger, in the other the entrance of any thought of impurity. Nor is this enough: the rule of our life is positive; not to hate is insufficient; we must love. The real remedy against anger is to love and desire the welfare of other people. In the same way purity is more than absence of foul desires; it is a power in itself which should hold and rule the life. The real remedy against impurity is love of God, the realising of His presence, a life lived with the sense of our Master standing ever present with us as our Friend and Helper. We should not keep before our minds and in our imagination the evil things which we are to avoid, but the life of Jesus Christ which He lived for our example. It is the hope of being like Him which purifies us, even as He is pure.

But even so there is for every one a struggle against temptations which force themselves upon us against our will. The temptation and the struggle are the necessary conditions of our life; yielding and defeat are not. It is one thing to be tempted, another to fall; and the future to which S. Paul bids us look forward is the

redemption of our body, its deliverance from the bondage which we here inherit.

There are further temptations which we make for ourselves, not content with the difficulties which meet us whether we will or no. We sometimes go out of our way to find them, invent occasions for indulgence of evil desire, and so make provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts.

This is not done at first deliberately with our eyes open; in this more than in most ways the first steps may be unconscious. We are led away by what other people do and say. We pervert the truth that to the pure all things are pure; and therefore books, pictures, conversation, society which possibly to some people may be harmless, can be to us a most serious danger. In no part of life is the warning against vain confidence more necessary, nowhere is it so essential to withstand the beginnings of mischief.

The Eighth Commandment, as much as the two preceding, orders something positive—to be true and just in all our dealings. Justice is an ideal to which we should reach up: this is something much higher than merely keeping our hands from picking and stealing and avoiding the lower forms of dishonesty. We must have a real desire to render to all their dues; and in whatever relation of life we stand, or whatever position we occupy, to discharge the duties of that position and satisfy the claims of that relation. This applies not only to positions for which we are paid, whether as superiors or as servants, but also to every position of trust. Scrupulous conscientiousness in fulfilling duties is one of the great tests of character, and the necessary condition of all useful service whether in Church or State.

The commandment also teaches the right use of money. We hold it, like our time, as a trust. We

sometimes pride ourselves on our generosity if we give a small fraction of our money in charity. We forget that this is an absolute obligation. Almsgiving forms with prayer and fasting the three notable duties of Christian life. When our Lord says, 'Give to him that asketh,' He does not mean that we are to give to every beggar that may ask for alms; but He does mean that every real need which comes in our way has a claim on our help and sympathy. What was said before about privilege in general applies with special force to money. It is a trust, and one of the purposes for which it is intrusted to us is the relief of those that need. This duty must be inspired by real sympathy, and not made a matter of mechanical rule. At the same time, we must not leave it to mere impulse, as casual feeling or opportunity may suggest. We must exercise care, forethought, and method in our charity, or it will never be sufficiently or wisely bestowed. Many people find it a help to devote a fixed proportion of their means to charitable purposes.

This sense of duty and responsibility will save us from the three chief ways in which money is misused.

1. Extravagance. It is impossible to lay down any general rule as to what is extravagant. What is extravagant for one man is not extravagant for another, provided there is always recognised the sense of restraint and responsibility. We have to answer for and to justify what we spend. Vulgar display and ostentation is no justification, nor is the mere passing fancy which spends large sums on some costly triviality, only to throw it aside the moment the whim is satisfied.

2. Debt. Money may be borrowed for sufficient reasons when we know that it can be repaid; but in ordinary life debt usually means that we have spent money we never ought to have spent, and are incurring

responsibilities we may quite possibly be unable to meet. To inflict on other people loss in this way is really fraud. And when Shakespeare says that 'borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry,' he means that there is only one thing which ruins the scrupulous sense of responsibility in dealing with money more than the readiness to borrow when we come to the end of our legitimate resources.

3. This thing is Gambling. Without discussing the morality of playing games for money whether the stakes be small or large, we acknowledge that it is not fair to use the term gambling for all practices of this kind. No thoughtful person, however, will deny that the one practice does very frequently lead to the other. It does so when the stake at hazard is so large that the player ought not to risk it, and that the idea of gaining money is the chief thing, while the game or sport upon which it is staked is in comparison put out of sight. The greed for money is said to be the root of all evil, and this evil is at its worst when the lust is, as it is with the gambler, to get money by mere hazard, without labour, without merit, and to the loss and not seldom to the ruin of other people. The mischief is twofold, to ourselves and to others. It is a form of excitement ruinous to character, a lust which grows by indulgence, destroys a man's self-control and responsibility, and renders him indifferent to the sufferings of other people. In these days no man would gamble if this were not the case. The vice is the curse of our time for all stations of society, from servants and clerks to men of what we call the learned professions and the nobility. Scarcely a week passes without some instance of theft or betrayal of trust to which the culprit has been tempted by losses in gambling and the wild hope that one last venture would prove successful and enable him to replace the money fraudulently taken.

Lastly, a word may be permitted on the duty of care in small matters, in keeping accounts, in remembering obligations, in scrupulous honour and integrity, in repaying every smallest debt. Boys at school are dangerously tempted to follow the miserable carelessness which prevails with regard to the appropriation and use of other people's books and other property. In some places custom is more lax than in others, and extends to community of goods in bats, bicycles, or even clothes. Things thus easily appropriated are not likely to be treated with special care or to be returned with punctuality. But schoolmasters have known cases when boys have been tempted to lies, or even theft, because their own property has been 'borrowed' by other people.

The Ninth Commandment. We have dealt in the sixth commandment with wrong to our neighbour's person, in the eighth to his property, in the ninth we touch his reputation. We are to keep our tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering. Injury may be done, of course, not only by the tongue, but by the pen, or even by a shrug of the shoulders or a glance of the eye.

Love to our neighbours implies the desire of their good; and it is unnecessary to insist on the wickedness of inventing or spreading rumours to their discredit. The deliberate crafty scheme to ruin the character of another is not a temptation very natural to an Englishman. We are, however, much too careless in repeating what we hear, and much too ready to listen to personal gossip, especially about people prominent either in the world at large or our own locality. Human nature is an interesting study, and the doings and sayings of important people are no doubt interesting, but ill-regulated interest in them ministers to two or three very mean vices.

First, idleness. Gossip is largely prevalent where people have nothing to do; the discussion of their neighbours

saves them from the necessity of finding some better employment of their time. Secondly, our sense of self-importance. We like to tell some story which is new to our audience, because it attracts attention and gives us a certain distinction. This is also the cause of exaggeration and invention of stories about our own performances or what we have seen and heard. Thirdly, it makes us feel more contented with ourselves if we find bigger folk doing petty things. This feeling is a degradation. We cannot believe that we are climbing upwards if we take delight in proving that others are slipping down. Readiness to believe the best and eagerness to hear the best of others is the condition of making the best of ourselves. This may be impressed upon us by a motto written in one of the houses of a great public school, 'Nil malum de absentibus.'

We see therefore that sins of the tongue are not confined to offences against this commandment. Words of blasphemy and irreverence are forbidden by the third, of anger by the sixth, of impurity by the seventh. Lies intended to cheat and defraud are dealt with by the eighth, and by the ninth mainly those which harm or make us careless about the reputation and honour of other people. Lying in principle, that is, the pledging of our honour and character to the truth of our words, is essentially contrary to the third.

Lastly, we come to **the Tenth Commandment**, the only one which as it stands in the Decalogue deals with motives apart from acts. It orders contentment, not to covet or desire other men's goods. Contentment means more than not grumbling. It means a firm and clear belief that the advantages and blessings of this life of ours are distributed by God's will and appointment, and not aimlessly, but with a definite purpose. Any one who thought it was a mere chance that others were better off than himself might possibly be contented in a way

because he would think it of no use to complain. But there is no doubt that much of the restlessness and discontent in the world is caused from refusing to recognise that God's Providence rules the world.

But this belief does not mean that the world is always to remain as it is; that no improvement in position is possible; and that the lower classes are to be so content with their position that they are not to try and get out of it. On the contrary, God gives to all His gifts to use. We are to learn and labour truly, to get our own living. True learning and true labour are not without their reward, and this reward is in the hands of God, and so we are to do our duty, not merely in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us, but in the state to which it shall please Him to call us. It may be higher or it may be lower, that is as He wills. His best gift is not wealth and position, but the power to love and serve Him. The desire to rise in life is a perfectly legitimate desire; indeed, difference of position is one of the means whereby God stimulates our effort. But we must rise not by complaining that we have not gifts and advantages which others have, but by believing that God has given to us what is needed for the work which He desires us to do. We are to use these truly and diligently for His glory and the welfare of our fellowmen; and whatever the result here, whether it be failure *or* success, as men count it, the real reward is sure, viz. God's blessing and a place where we may serve Him for ever hereafter.

CHAPTER X

PRAYER

Prayer.—We have now considered our duties. The Catechism reminds us again and again that these duties cannot be fulfilled except through God's special grace; that is, by His free favour and goodness, which we have done nothing to deserve, and especially the gift of power of His Holy Spirit working in our hearts. This reminder of the Catechism is very necessary. It is a natural instinct of men, and not least of Englishmen, to be self-reliant, to scorn the idea of assistance, to imagine that they can do everything necessary themselves. Sophocles, in the tragedy of Ajax, represents this proud feeling of self-reliance and rejection of prayer, this scornful refusal to accept the help of the gods; he shows its miserable failure and downfall. Christians know that whatever a man may think, he never does do any good thing without the help of God's Holy Spirit; and that some gift of the Spirit is not refused even to those who seem to have lost their faith in Him, and do not pray for His aid.

For Christians the duty of asking our heavenly Father for all things needful both for our souls and bodies is made so clear by our Lord's express instructions and by His example that we cannot for a moment question it. Indeed, to ask God for what we feel we want is a natural instinct also. But there are one or two difficulties that we must face.

1. Prayer seems unnecessary. God knows our necessities before we ask, and therefore needs not that we should bring them before Him. He constantly does give us blessings beyond our prayers, and often in spite of our refusal to pray.

2. Prayer to us sometimes seems vain because it is not answered. We pray earnestly and, so far as we know, in faith, and the prayer is not granted.

3. We cannot understand how God's purposes can be changed by our petitions. If it is His will that such and such a thing should be, we are tempted to think it will be, and the course of God's Providence cannot be altered.

It is sufficient to reply that there is no command of our Lord more clear than the command to pray; no promise of His more certain than that prayer shall be answered. If we have perplexities, we can only find the way out of them if we begin by reverently studying what Jesus did and what He said. His life was a life of prayer.

There are, however, one or two thoughts which may help us:—

1. It seems to be the will of God not to work out His purpose for the redemption of mankind without the co-operation of our free choice. It was man's choice which brought sin into the world. And man must work with God to triumph over sin. He must work by prayer. Man has been permitted to thwart or disappoint God's purpose, and if he does not pray he will thwart this purpose still. For man's prayer is a power by which God has appointed that His kingdom should be brought nearer. We cannot pray unless we believe in this power of prayer. Each of us can bring God's kingdom nearer by his prayers. We may all of us be sure of this, that by our earnest prayer we hasten the day when all that is evil shall be overcome, and sorrow and sighing shall

flee away. Our prayers are a power to make the world happier and better. God's will is wrought by us.

2. But God wishes us to pray for special things for ourselves and for others. Here we must remember we come to Him as our Father; and we must ask simply, naturally, trustfully. We know there are many things we ask for which we do not obtain, and many things which we soon see it was good for us not to receive. But so it is with gifts which we ask from an earthly parent. We have not what we ask, but what we need. When our Lord bids us give to him that asks of us, He does not mean that we should give to every beggar everything that he demands. He would have us think of every real need of our brethren which comes before us, and relieve it if we can. Sometimes two people may ask for the same thing; He cannot give it to both. So before God there rise from His children warring prayers, unwise prayers, sometimes uncharitable prayers. We must ask according to God's will. For the answer is promised to those who ask in Christ's name.

3. And yet though He knows what is best for us, though He gives many times without our asking, and refuses what we think we need, He bids us ask. For prayer is a power within us. It purifies our hearts and desires. It makes us covet earnestly the best things. We feel sometimes how wrong and poor our aims and wishes are directly we put them in words of petition to God. But there is something else. A gift is useless unless the person to whom it is given is capable of receiving it and using it. The effectual power of God's gifts to us depends upon our power of receiving them. We are surrounded with God's gifts; it is only through prayer that we can effectually receive and use them. For example, in the Sacraments there is a definite gift of grace given, but it is only made use of by the faithful.

It seems that here again we may thwart God's gracious purpose by hardening our hearts against His blessings. Prayer is the power within us which opens our hearts to receive and use them.

We have, then, in the first two words of the Lord's Prayer the reason why we should pray, and a direction how we should pray. If God is our Father, we must pray; if He is not, we dare not. So in early Christian times the Lord's Prayer was reserved for the baptized —those preparing for baptism were not permitted to join. They had not received the restoration of sonship which we have in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, we come to God the Father, Who has both created us and adopted us as His redeemed children. He is in heaven, and on His right hand is our Advocate, Jesus Christ, Who continually makes intercession for us.

Our Father which art in heaven. This is the first division of the Prayer—the Address. It is connected with the petitions by the words 'in heaven.' The words 'on earth as it is in heaven' seem to belong to each of the first three petitions. We pray that earth may be made like heaven, first, by the hallowing of God's name; next, by the coming of His kingdom; thirdly, by the fulfilling of His will.

By God's name we mean the Being, the Nature, and Character of God as we know it. We began by considering what we mean by our own name. It implies our personality, and all that people connect with our personality. When we wish to keep our name from dishonour, we desire that no dishonour shall attach to ourselves, or people's thought of us. We pray, then, that in man's inmost thoughts God may be reverenced; not only that men may never actually utter sacred words with coarseness or profanity, but that they may keep God always before them as claiming the devotion

and worship of their lives—that they may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him as they ought to do.

We pray that Christ's kingdom may come. S. John the Baptist proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. We are still praying that it may come. The phrase therefore is used in more than one sense. It means here the great ideal to which we look forward—the final triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ—when everything that opposes His will has been overcome, all evil banished, all sorrow and sighing fled away, death the last enemy destroyed. We are taught to believe that we are called to take our part in the great struggle of good against evil; that we have our place in bringing about the coming of Christ's kingdom. Part of this work must be done by our prayers. In our daily lives we should think that every act which we do in Christ's name, every word we speak on His side, is a blow struck in the battle which brings the kingdom nearer. We are working out something more than our own salvation. God is allowing us to work with Him for the accomplishment of His great purpose.

And to be faithful soldiers in this warfare we must surrender our wills to Him. 'Thy will be done' is a phrase which generally implies resignation to losses or disappointments which come to us in life, which we learn to accept and not to murmur at, because we know that they would not have happened if God had not so willed it. But the words are more than a pious expression of acceptance of what has happened to us in the past; they are a prayer for the future, and teach us part of the mystery of prayer. It might seem certain that what God wills must come about, and that it is almost impertinent to pray that it may. But in allowing us freedom of choosing, God has given to men the power of thwarting His will that all should

be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. So we pray for ourselves and others that everything in our hearts which opposes the will of God may be taken away—all selfishness and sloth, all fretfulness and obstinacy, all vain confidence and trust in our own wisdom and desire of our own way. The surrendered life is the life which believes in God's high purpose for it and for all, and which prays daily that it and all may correspond to it.

We pray for our daily bread—all things needful both for our souls and bodies. We pray, as Agur prayed, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.' But we have what he had not the express assurance of our Lord Himself that God, Who clothes the grass of the field, will not leave our bodies destitute, or our souls without support. The Greek original of *daily* bread, for which we are taught to pray, means bread 'for the coming day.' It means ordinary food. But our Lord has taught us that man does not live by bread alone, and all that is necessary for our truest and highest life must be part of our prayer. So we may include in it all the food of our souls, and especially the food which God gives us in the Holy Communion.

We pray for God's merciful forgiveness of our sins. We do so in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, and as members of His Church. The condition, therefore, is that we should forgive those who have trespassed against us. This is the law of love, which is the law of the Church, and insisted on by our Lord again and again. If we cherish harsh, vindictive thoughts, and desire revenge or the suffering of those who have wronged us, we are offending against the first principles of the society in which we obtain remission of our sins. But this forgiveness does not mean absence of punishment. The

results of the sins which are forgiven go on and on, and bring sorrow and misery oftentimes beyond our power to stop. The consequences of sin often remain for us. God often punishes us even while He forgives. What we pray for is that we may not be separated from His love; that the separation made between us and Him by our misdoings may be done away.

The Prayer continues, 'Lead us,' or, as it may be more literally put, 'Bring us not into temptation.' But even with this change we ask how God Himself can bring us into temptation? S. James tells us that no man, when he is tempted, must say he is tempted of God; for God does not tempt any man. But the word 'tempt' has two meanings—(1) to try and persuade any one to do wrong; (2) to test or try character. In the first sense it is impossible with God—not in the second. God has set man in the world on purpose to test him. Our Lord does not pray for His disciples that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil one. If we are in the world, we are in a state of trial. Indeed, S. James tells us to count it joy when we fall into trials of various kinds, because trial works patience. We may welcome the opportunity of showing our faithfulness to our Master. But there is still the other side—the possibility of falling. The Lord's Prayer bids us think of this.

Trial is the natural condition of life. Yet

1. We may pray to be spared so far as God sees fit to spare us.

2. We may claim God's promise that He will with the temptation make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.

3. We must remember how many of our temptations are due to our own carelessness, or presumption, or want of energy and vigilance. Our Lord told His

disciples to watch and pray that they might not enter into temptation, thus clearly showing that temptation may be warded off by prayer.

By yielding to temptation we place ourselves in the power of the tempter: we pray therefore to be delivered from evil, *i.e.* first of all, as the Revised Version and the Catechism both put it, from the evil one, our ghostly or spiritual enemy, and from the result of his power, eternal death; secondly, from evil in any shape, dangers which may happen to the body, as well as evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.

The words with which the Lord's Prayer usually ends do not form an original part of it. They probably were added in the worship of the Christian Church, as we add a doxology to every Psalm. The paraphrase in the Catechism also is not based on any words in the Prayer itself, but on our Lord's own command to ask everything in His name. If all prayer is to be made in His name, the Prayer He Himself taught us must be offered so, and therefore we end it with the word with which the Jews of old solemnly ended theirs, the word so often and so solemnly used by our Lord Himself, 'Verily, verily.' So we pray, and so we believe God will answer.

CHAPTER XI

BAPTISM

The Sacraments.—The Christian teaching of the nature of our bodies prepares us for the study of the Sacraments. We believe that man's nature is one. His body is not an evil thing in which his soul is for a time imprisoned, and from which it will one day be set free. What we look forward to is the redemption of the body, the glorification of the whole of our nature. Our bodies and spirits are so closely connected that we cannot think of them as separated. Our spirits are constantly affected by things that we can touch and see. So our Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to us in the form of a man, and united our nature to His own; and still He uses outward signs, water and bread and wine, as means by which He conveys spiritual graces to our hearts. They are signs or representations of a grace given to us. Water represents cleansing and refreshing, bread and wine represent support and nourishment. But the Sacraments are not merely pictures or acted stories. God through them actually conveys and gives to us the gifts they represent. Our faith and assurance in God's gift is increased by seeing something with our eyes and tasting something with our lips. They are pledges to assure us that God has done something for us, but they are also the means whereby God does it.

There are three conditions of a Sacrament—(1) The

outward sign; (2) the inward grace; (3) the appointment by our Lord Himself. The Catechism speaks of two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in His Church as generally, that is, *universally*, necessary to salvation. Confirmation, Absolution, Marriage, Ordination, and the Anointing of the Sick also have an outward sign and an inward grace, but are not on the same level as Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism.—This is the first Sacrament in order. The word Sacrament originally meant the oath of allegiance taken by a Roman soldier to his commander. In this way the word is specially appropriate to Baptism, which is our enlistment in the Christian army. But the Roman soldier derived no unseen power from his profession, nor was he made partaker of any unseen life in the army which he joined. Such life we have, and so we see the special grace of the Sacraments as ordinances of the Church.

Baptism was originally administered by dipping the person into water, but now more usually by pouring water upon the person with the words, 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' This is the outward form. By it the Catechism tells us we are *made* children of grace. We are regenerate or born again. We enter into a new relation to God. By our natural birth we are sons of God, but sons who have lost their birthright and forfeited their inheritance in heaven. This birthright was won back for mankind by Jesus Christ, and is the right of all who claim it through Him. The Church claims it for her children in baptism, for in baptism we are admitted into the society of the Church, which is mysteriously united with Christ, so that we are members of His Body.

The gift, then, of Baptism is a new relation to God, membership in a new society, the kingdom of heaven.

There seems little doubt that children were baptized in the earliest ages of the Church, and our Baptismal Service justifies the practice by the example of our Lord receiving the little children that were brought to Him. Furthermore, it is the natural consequence of the true doctrine of the Sacrament. It is not the will of God that any child should die without being brought to Christ, as He Himself commanded; and once more, from our very earliest years all our duty is based upon the fact that God has received us, that we have been admitted into the fellowship, and that we must live by the law of God's kingdom, of which we are subjects.

Two warnings are necessary. First, the Catechism tells us that the inward grace is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. Baptism does not convey by itself any freedom from temptation, any lessening of the tendency to evil with which we were born; it merely admits us to a new life and a new spirit, and gives us grace to struggle against evil. But this life must be consciously lived, and this spirit consciously appropriated. We are transferred from a kingdom of which the law is sin and death to the kingdom of grace and righteousness and life. This is the gift of God, but it depends upon ourselves whether we use it. God puts us in the state of grace, and admits us to His love; it rests with us whether we remain in it.

Secondly, while we say that Baptism conveys a gift, and not merely the promise of a gift, we must understand what the gift is. We are taught to say that we have been in it called to a state of salvation; to believe in one baptism for the remission of sins. This does not mean that all baptized people will go to heaven. In the case of those who have been baptized when grown up, it means that their past sins are forgiven. But in the case of those who, like ourselves, have been baptized

when infants, it means that our original sin is forgiven, and that the relation to God to which baptism admits us is the way in which, if we keep to it, our sins may be forgiven. But we must be true to it. Sins committed after baptism are in a way more grievous than the sins of the unbaptized. If after our baptism we disobey the law of God in a serious matter with our full knowledge and consent, we commit what is called mortal or deadly sin. We ought to be much more careful about this than we sometimes are. Mortal sin deprives us of the grace of God. It robs the soul of life and separates us from Christ. It is in fact the death of the soul. To restore the soul to life God has appointed in His Church the ministry of absolution. This will be explained more fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

HOLY COMMUNION

The Holy Communion.—We have seen that when the whole race of mankind was separated from God by sin, men, as it were by instinct, desired to end up this estrangement by sacrifice. This desire found its fulfilment in the sacrifice of the death of Jesus Christ, which created the new society which we call His Church.

On the night before He suffered, when He was eating the last Passover with His disciples, He gave them commandment to continue a perpetual memorial of the death which He was to undergo. And just as by that death the life of the Church began in the first instance, so by its commemoration the life of the Church and the union between its members and its Head is maintained.

Again and again in the Bible we are told that Christ died once and for all; the great sacrifice can never be repeated. But in heaven He continually pleads the merits of His death before the Father; and what He, our Lord and Master, does in heaven, that by His appointment the Church does on earth. We not only offer our thanksgivings to God, but also commemorate and plead before Him the sacrifice whereby we approach Him as His sons.

Thus the Catechism tells us that the Sacrament of the

Lord's Supper was ordained for continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ.

As a sacrifice we must first consider it, and we shall see that it corresponds to all the various forms of sacrifice in the Jewish Church.

First, there was the **peace offering** and the meat (*i.e.* food) offering. This was made in token of thankfulness for God's mercies, for the protection and support of His providential love. In the Communion Service we place upon the altar the money given by the congregation, and also the bread and wine. This is a solemn act, during which the people should stand and think that they are acknowledging their dependence upon God for their daily bread and for all their worldly gifts. We may by accident have nothing to give, and no one need be excluded from Holy Communion because there is no gift in his hand, but we must not allow selfishness or carelessness ever to prevent us making our offering at a time when it has such special meaning.

Secondly, there was the **sin offering**. When the Jews sacrificed an animal as a sin offering, the blood of the animal was specially and solemnly poured out before God. So in the prayer of consecration we commemorate the death of Christ and the shedding of His blood. And when the bread and wine are consecrated to be the Body and Blood of Christ, they are identified with that offering which He presents before the Father in Heaven. This is the real sacrifice of the Eucharist, and its nature is beautifully taught in the verse

> 'And now, O Father, mindful of the love
> That bought us, once for all, on Calvary's tree,
> And having with us Him that pleads above,
> We here present, we here spread forth to Thee
> That only Offering perfect in Thine eyes,
> The one true, pure, immortal Sacrifice.'

Thirdly, there was the **burnt offering**. Of the other sacrifices large parts of the victims were given back to the worshipper, and some kept by the priests. But the burnt offering was entirely consumed, to indicate entire devotion to the service of God. So in the prayer which follows the receiving of the Sacrament we say, 'We offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice' unto God. First, in the service we offer what belongs to us, and now we offer ourselves. But we cannot offer ourselves as a 'holy' sacrifice, or offer any acceptable 'sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,' unless we do it in union with Him Who is our perfect Sacrifice.

We must plead His death as He pleads it. Let us think of the **prayer of consecration**.

This consists of three parts. First, there is the solemn commemoration of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, the propitiation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; secondly, there is the prayer that we who receive the bread and wine may be partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood; and thirdly, there is the recital of the institution of the Sacrament in the words of our Lord Himself. Of this **institution** there are four accounts in Holy Scripture—in the first three Gospels and in S. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. The last account, we may note, is one of two things of which S. Paul speaks in a specially solemn way as things which he 'received.' The words of our Lord are not precisely the same in all accounts, but in the consecration prayer they are combined. He took the loaf of bread, the cup of wine, which were on the table of the Passover meal. He gave thanks, as He had done before feeding the five thousand. He gave it to them, saying, 'Eat,' 'Drink.' 'This is my Body which is given for you.' 'This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the

remission of sins.' 'Do this as oft as ye eat, as oft as ye drink, in remembrance of Me.'

These words need some explanation. When our Lord said, 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' He means not merely that the disciples were to go through a certain form of action in order that they might not forget Him. The words imply the solemn commemoration and pleading of His death before God the Father.

Again, whatever our Lord meant for His disciples when He said, '**This is My Body**,' '**This is my Blood**,' that in our Communion Service the words mean for us. It is plain that our Lord could not have meant that the bread was His body in a material sense. He was sitting with His disciples; His Blood had not been shed. It is equally clear that the words mean more than, 'This represents My Body.' The Church of England equally avoids the Roman error that at the words of consecration the bread ceases to be bread, and the wine ceases to be wine, and the opposite error of saying that they remain bread and wine and nothing else. The elements remain bread and wine, yet no longer common bread and wine, but elements which God Himself receives and makes in a spiritual way the Body and Blood of His Son our Lord. There is no material change whatever, but a spiritual change of the highest importance.

For this mystery any illustration from human life must be insufficient, and the illustration of the sealing of a document often used in Holy Scripture may be in this connection somewhat misleading. Still, if we take an action more familiar to us, viz. the signing of a cheque, we can see how, without any material change, we make what was a mere piece of wastepaper into a document of value and effect. It is not, like a receipt, a mere acknowledgment of something done; it is the means whereby we effect our purpose. The paper does

not become gold, but it is as valuable as gold, yet only to the rightful possessor. No one else partakes of any benefit from it, and to those who try to use it wrongfully it is even a cause of punishment.

There is, however, this important difference. The cheque may be separated from its giver, not so the elements of the Sacrament. With them our Lord gives us Himself. We have His Real Presence in the Eucharist. No doubt, it is difficult for us to realise what is meant by the Presence in a particular place of Him Who is present everywhere. But still, He has promised His special presence where two or three are gathered together in His Name, and how much more when they are making the memorial which He commanded. We do not believe that He is confined to one particular spot. He is present by special exercise of His Power. So we read that even when our Lord was on earth, there was one occasion specially noted because 'the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.'

This brings us to think of the second aspect of the Sacrament as a feast. Just as the Jewish worshipper received back from the priest part of the victim which he had offered, in order that he might hold a solemn feast with his friends, so God takes the gifts of bread and wine which we offer to Him, consecrates them that they may be to us the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and then gives them back to us. So the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

This means much more than merely thinking upon His life and teaching, and endeavouring to follow His example. It means the strengthening and refreshing of our souls; our sinful bodies are made clean by His Body; our souls washed through His most precious Blood; we dwell in Him, and He in us. This is the grace which,

before we receive the consecrated elements, we pray may be given us, nor is it possible to put in plainer words the idea which the eating and drinking of the sacred Body and Blood should convey to our minds. A cleansing from bodily stain, a healing of the sins of the soul, a union close and intimate between our Master and ourselves. That is not the result of tasting common food; we believe in the gift and its result. Into the way in which God works His gifts we cannot penetrate. It is enough that the bread and wine become what Christ wills them to be.

> 'He was the Word and spake it,
> He took the bread and brake it,
> And what that Word doth make it
> That I believe and take it.'

We have thus considered the Holy Communion first as a sacrifice, then as a feast; on our part we must think of it first as a duty and a command to be obeyed, a sacrifice of praise, devotion, and thanksgiving to be offered, and then as a privilege and benefit to be enjoyed. Those who think only or mainly of what they are to get very often are disappointed. They say they do not see the good of coming; they do not feel they are better or stronger or more pure in heart. If we think first of what we ought to give, God will not allow us to be disappointed of our hope.

The Catechism proceeds to teach us **what is required** of them that come to the Lord's Supper. The fact of God's great gift does not depend upon ourselves. There the gift is, whatever we are or think or do. But its value for us does depend upon our worthiness. Indeed, the Bible and our Prayer Book repeat most solemn warnings against those who receive it unworthily. They eat and drink, as S. Paul says, not as we have it translated,

'damnation,' but 'judgment' to themselves. Being worthy does not mean being perfectly sinless or free from temptation. But it does mean that we may not approach the Holy Communion after committing any deliberate disobedience of God's law for which we have not sought God's forgiveness. It means also a sincere desire to be what God wills us to be, and to do what God wishes us to do; and therefore also honest ceaseless struggle and effort to be this and to do this. If we have not, and know that we have not, this desire, and are not making, and know that we are not making, this effort, then the Sacrament, which makes the union between Christ and His people most complete, only marks and increases our separation from Him, and this is what 'judgment' really means. Every gift of the Sacrament turns into its opposite—the food which should strengthen the life of the soul only increases its deadness to spiritual things.

We are therefore bidden to examine our consciences, to see whether we really hate and are sorry for the things which we have done wrong, and whether our purpose to lead the new life is steadfast and sincere. We must get this foundation of the religious life laid firm and sure. Even about this, unless we examine ourselves, we are very likely to be deceived. We may fancy we wish to do the right thing, and yet continually desire and continually practise things which in our heart of hearts we know are contrary to the first principles of our profession. And even if this be not so, God demands from us our utmost, a perfect service. There is no department of life which does not need perpetual examination. Even in our games we continually develop careless ways and bad habits of which we are quite unconscious. And in our moral and religious life, in our manners and behaviour to our friends, in our discipline of ourselves,

we may easily sink into easygoing, inconsiderate, irreligious ways without being at all aware how far away we have fallen.

Self-examination then deals first with main principles, and then leads us on the road to perfection.

The first should form part of our daily prayer. At night our thoughts should turn back to the events of the day. If we are honest with ourselves and bring the day's doing before the throne of God, He will show us wherein we have been untrue, and will hear our prayer for forgiveness.

The second more minute examination should be made more rarely. The rules given in books of devotion will often be found useful. To many no doubt the frequency and minuteness there advised will be found not only burdensome, but unnatural. We have liberty to choose, but we must realise the danger of self-deception, the temptation to sloth in this matter, and what the purpose of self-examination is. It is to make of our lives the best we can, to bring them as near as we can to the example of our Master. We are ready enough to see faults in others which we can scarcely understand their taking no trouble to correct. Faults and omissions of which we are ignorant cannot possibly be amended, and failure in examining ourselves means perpetuating unconscious faults, and this will certainly make us tolerate and prevent us from taking trouble to amend the faults and failures of which we are aware.

Self-examination must be followed by **confession.** Confession is of three kinds. First, in our private prayers—the acknowledgment of disobedience to a loving Father—the prayer for forgiveness. Without the feeling of sin as a wrong to God the religious life can scarcely be said to have begun. But the religious life is not an isolated life. God receives us as members of the brotherhood

of the Church. Sin is therefore a breaking of the conditions of our membership, of the promise of our baptism when we were admitted. It is a wrong to our brethren: no sin we commit ends with ourselves, it means our influence for evil to others, or a lessening of the power of good. There is therefore appointed the second form of confession in public worship. As members of the brotherhood we have done amiss, and the priest, as God's appointed minister in the Church and as the representative of the brotherhood, prays for God's forgiveness of us. This is the meaning of the confession we make and the absolution we receive in the Holy Communion. This absolution conveys the assurance that in spite of our transgressions we are by God's forgiveness still members incorporate in the blessed company of all faithful people, and may therefore share in its highest privilege.

Thirdly, if our conscience is not satisfied, if we cannot feel sure of our right of membership, and feel that our transgression is such that we have separated ourselves too gravely from the life of the redeemed, we are bidden to come privately to the priest and confess to him what we have done wrong. As God's priest he has the right to refuse absolution, which means that he tells us that the sincerity of our repentance needs further proof before we can be admitted to the Sacrament. Absolution means that he pronounces God's forgiveness of us, and in God's behalf he restores us to the full rights of membership, from which sin must by its nature cut us off.

The Church of England clearly regards private confession as voluntary. But when we find ourselves entangled in bodily temptations, from which we cannot with all our struggles set ourselves free, or in habits from which we cannot get loose, or our conscience is not at peace, it is a duty to resort to the means of grace

which God has appointed in His Church, and not idly drift in a round of sinful practice, the end of which must be the hardening of heart and spiritual death.

We should carefully consider how often it is our duty to communicate. The Prayer Book says, 'Every parishioner shall communicate at least three times in the year, of which Easter to be one' Communion at Easter, therefore, and two other times besides—usually Christmas and Whitsunday—is what, as loyal members of the Church of England, we are bound to observe. But for those who wish to keep their lives up to a true Christian standard, Communion should generally be made not less than once a month.

To more frequent Communion we should look forward and pray that we may be fitted for it, but at first greater frequency may lessen the earnestness of our preparation and self-examination. On the importance of care in this matter we cannot too strongly insist. Those who look back, as hundreds can, on a rule of monthly Communion reverenced and unbroken from Confirmation onwards, know that life has no such safeguard. There is the continual strengthening of the spirit, and, in stress of temptation, the memory of a vow renewed, and the looking forward to a Presence into which we dare not come with the burden of faithless denial on our soul.

CHAPTER XIII

RECAPITULATION

It is as impossible as it would be out of place in preparation for Confirmation to give at length the evidences of the truth of Christianity, or to deal with all the difficulties and doubts which rise in men's minds with regard to it. But some questions must rise in every intelligent mind, and it is above all things necessary to understand that they can never be answered if we look at Confirmation as a thing which stands by itself. It is part of the whole system of our Christian faith, and this rests on some broad principles, of which we are now able to give a short summary.

We start with Duty and Conscience. Our duty is not merely that course of conduct which men have discovered on the whole to be the best for them in the long-run, it is what God wills. No doubt, as God is a loving Father, what He wills for us is also that which is best for us. But it makes all the difference whether we think of a breach of duty as merely an imprudence for ourselves or sin against God. And conscience is God's witness to tell us what our duty is. Yet still we find conscience sometimes an insufficient guide, sometimes it even misleads us. How can this be? We answer, because of that catastrophe which lies at the beginning of the history of our race, and which we call 'the Fall of Man.' By sin

and disobedience man lost the clear light which would otherwise have guided him always surely and certainly. It is this, then, which God restores to us in Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

Men need first the knowledge of God's will, next the loving desire to do it, then the power. These are the gifts our Lord came from heaven to bring. And when He ascended to heaven, He did not leave His disciples to follow Him each separately as they might, but He united them into an organised society to be on earth what He Himself had been the means of handing on God's gifts to men. This the Church does first by a special ministry, secondly by sacramental rites, of which Confirmation is one. The Church is no invisible abstraction. The Church militant at least consists of men and women of our flesh and blood, but united in a definite way by the visible sign of Baptism, bound by the same promises as ourselves, sharers with us of the same gifts. And the unity is secured and the gifts transmitted by a definite order of ministers set apart from other members of the Church by something which is not only an outward sign of authority, but also conveys to them grace to exercise it. It comes by transmission through an unbroken chain from the Apostles, and with the very words by which they received their commission from our Lord Himself.

But the Church hands on to us something more than the ministry; she gives us the rule of faith and duty, telling us what we are to believe and what we are to do. This rule is what S. Paul tells us he had himself 'received,' a 'form of sound words,' which we find him handing on to Timothy with instructions in his turn 'to commit them to faithful men who may be able to teach others also.' This rule we hold to be substantially the same as the Creed which at our Baptism and

Confirmation we promise to believe, and the commandments which we then promise to obey.

We cannot, however, shut our eyes to the fact that there are many good men who do not agree with us. Some believe things to be true which we feel sure are not true, some disbelieve what we feel sure is the truth. Some differ from us as to the real teaching of the Church, some reject the teaching of the Church altogether. There are still millions whom her teaching has not yet reached. Here we have difficulties to which we do not profess to be able to give any short answer; they are part of the conditions of our imperfect knowledge. Still we are taught that there is only one Name given under heaven whereby men must be saved. God has promised us His gifts under definite conditions—the conditions which we call His Covenant, within which we thankfully believe we have been brought. To those outside we do not deny the possibility of God's gifts, because we dare not limit His lovingkindness. Still, we dare not presume upon this. God deals with all according to their opportunities. The heathen are in ignorance, many in nominally Christian countries are surrounded by vicious and criminal conditions. Even in the lives of most earnest Christian people the influence of early education and association can never be effaced; and many differences of opinion arise from circumstances for which we are not originally responsible. It is, however, our duty not to excuse ourselves too easily.

We cannot each for ourselves enter into all the arguments upon which the truth of Christianity is based. When we consider the mass of books and the difficulty of the questions, it is a sheer impossibility for any but a comparatively few scholars even to have a notion what they are. Meanwhile, for the young, for the poor, for those who are not very clever, and whose days are filled

with hard work and absorbing duties, there must be some message of God which they can understand, some rule by which they can work, some truth on which they can rest, some consolation in which they can trust. We must have some point to start from; and if we believe in God's Providence at all, and know that we begin our lives where He has placed us, this starting-point must be the teaching of our homes.

But this truth which we receive we must each of us prove to be true for *ourselves*. The need of which the Church speaks we must feel. We must find the gifts of grace as real a satisfaction of a definite spiritual want as bodily food is a satisfaction of a bodily want. This is what an old writer calls the witness of the natural Christianity of the soul. We must see that the ideals of the world and the flesh are false ideals; that the ideal and the goal of Christianity is that for which man was really created; and that the Church is 'the way' by which God means us to reach up to it. This must be matter of personal experience; we must find it is so for *us*; and if we do not find it so, there must be some disturbing cause, just as there is with the body if it rejects or feels no need of food.

This may be pride and conceit, the pride of intellect, which makes us think that we can discover all truth without the guidance of God's Spirit; the pride of will, which suggests to us that we are strong enough to do our duty without any supernatural aid. Hence our Lord tells us that we must receive the kingdom of God as little children if we are to enter therein. But the most fatal thing is the lingering desire that we may still enjoy some pleasure which we find it difficult to resign, or refuse some duty which we find particularly irksome. It is to the pure heart that Jesus promises the vision of God. That is the heart which has the pure desire to do

God's will, for he that willeth to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine.

And the witness once formed in our own hearts will be strengthened from without by lives we see moved by God's grace in the present, by the records and the history of the saints in the past. The work of the Church to-day, its vigorous life, the history of its growth, its preservation and its triumphs, are an appeal that all who are members of it can understand, most clearly, perhaps, by God's grace in our own land and our own mother Church of England. The conditions of her life have been changed, her teaching has received new light from new discoveries, but the course of that life has never been broken, the foundations of the faith have never been shaken.

And so we meet the challenge of attack, for truth must stand the shock of time and argument. The life of the Church is a miraculous life, and there is nothing which the doubting mind finds it easier to attack than miracles. Yet if, as the Christian religion teaches, it is true that God Himself came down from heaven to take our nature upon Him, and lived as man on earth, nearly everybody would admit that it is most natural to find both in the preparation for His coming and in His life on earth something outside the usual course of nature. But men ask for the evidence for miracles. Here let us acknowledge at once that for some of the miracles of the Old Testament the evidence is of a very different kind from that which God has given us for what we may call the foundation miracles of our faith. The story of Jonah is believed by many to be an allegory; certainly the account of the sun standing still is a fragment of an ancient national hymn of triumph. But with the Birth and Resurrection of Jesus Christ it is not so. For the latter S. Paul gives us the most complete

and sufficient witness; while one of the most recent and candid writers on the Gospel of S. Luke gives us good reason for supposing that the authority for the Evangelist's account of the birth of our Lord is no other than the Blessed Virgin herself. S. Paul tells us that he himself had proved his Apostleship by miracles; and the miraculous account of the birth and early history of the Church contained in the Acts of the Apostles has certainly been strengthened rather than weakened by recent discovery and investigation.

But the Church has not only a miraculous life, it has a sacramental life. This means that God's gifts are conveyed to men through human ministry and by material signs. And so long as in man's nature body, soul, and spirit are bound together, so it will be. We know as a fact how outward things like sunlight and fresh air affect our spirits through our bodies; how our spirits may be depressed and God Himself seem to be shut out by ill health or bodily weakness. It is no idolatry if the beauty of a cathedral church, or the sound of chants, or sight of a cross upon a spire, or a picture which tells us how God loved the world, moves our hearts to loving adoration. God is a Spirit; but when He came to dwell upon earth, He sanctified not only our human nature, but also all material things—the earth He trod, the air He breathed, above all, water in which He Himself was baptized, and bread and wine which He makes for us His Body and His Blood. And it was He Who laid His hands upon children and blessed them, and through His minister He blesses them still.

And so we think of Confirmation. It matters little that we are not told in the Gospels in so many words that our Master ordered this means of grace. For we find that after our Lord's Ascension, from the very first the Apostles laid their hands upon those who were bap-

tized, and they received the Holy Ghost. We can hardly imagine this ceremony would have been performed, or this grace given, had not our Lord specially commanded it. And in the Confirmation Service the Bishop specially prays for those upon whom, after the example of the Apostles, he has laid his hands. This act, with the prayer which precedes it, is the central and necessary part of the service, and the outward sign by which the gift is conveyed. Our own promise is most impressive and solemn, but not the most essential part, and this it is important to remember.

The Confirmation prayer appeals to the great fact that God in our baptism did grant to us forgiveness of our sins; it prays for the further privilege that in Confirmation He will grant to us His Holy Spirit with His sevenfold gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, spiritual strength, knowledge, godliness, and holy fear; or, in other words, the love of God, the knowledge of His will, and the strength to do it. The special gift of the Holy Spirit which our Lord before His Ascension promised He would send to His Church generally, is given to us individually to dwell with us. Instead of vague influences working on us from outside, as an engine moves machinery, we are to have the secret of forces within us to guide us and to strengthen us.

This guidance comes as a call from God to show us what He would have us to do, what the special work in life is that He has marked out for us, and the way in which we are to serve Him. This makes our lives separated and dedicated to their peculiar duties.

> 'I make nó vows, but vows
> Are then made for me, bond unknown to me
> Is given that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated spirit.'

Further, it makes our lives consecrated lives. What

Ordination is to the priest, that Confirmation is to every member of the Church. For priesthood means being intrusted by God with mysterious gifts and privileges which we are not selfishly to keep for ourselves, but to hand on to others. As the runners in the old races at Athens handed on the blazing torch from hand to hand, so we have to hand on to others the privileges which God has given to us—the knowledge of His truth, the teaching of His Holy Spirit. It is to this duty we are called by the Master to Whose service we are pledged, Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

THE END

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